

THE BRUCE BOX: EXCLUSIVE *TRACKS* LINER NOTES

#61 WINTER 1998

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Backstreet

THE BOSS MAGAZINE

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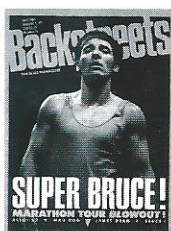
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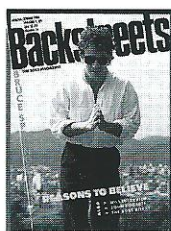


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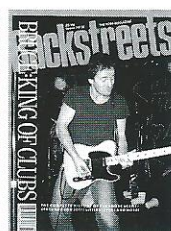
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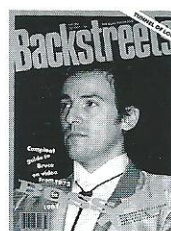
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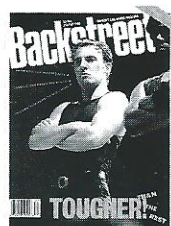
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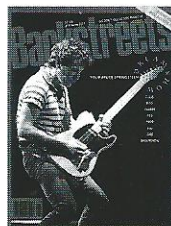
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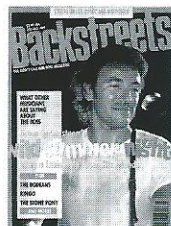
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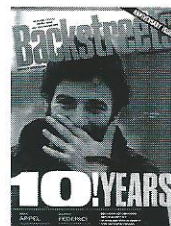
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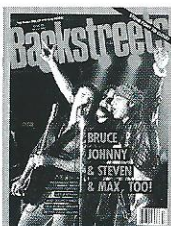
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passes.....\$5



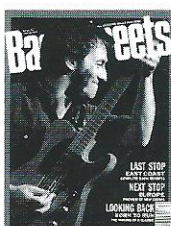
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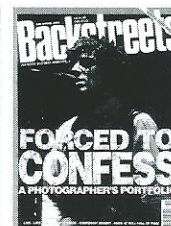
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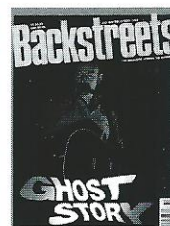
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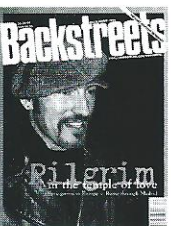
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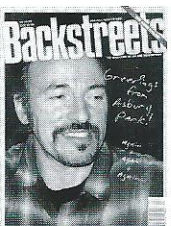
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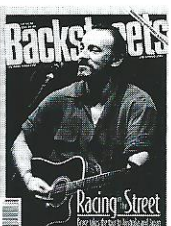
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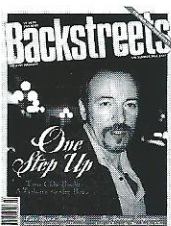
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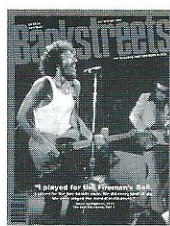
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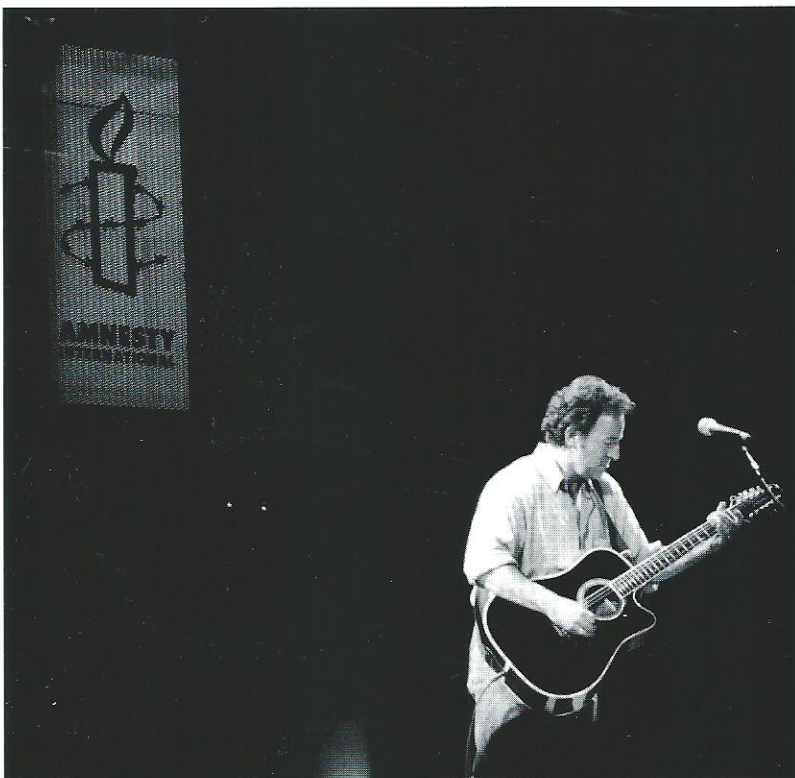
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Human Rights Now! was then, this is now: the 12/10/98 Amnesty concert.

Backstreets

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CONTENTS

WINTER 1998
#61 Vol. 16, No. 1

FEATURES

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: TRACKS

The outtakes are out. Coverage begins here . . . **14**

- The review. By Jonathan B. Pont. **15**
- Q&A with Vini Lopez. By Robert Makin. . . **16**
- Tracks Two?* By Charles R. Cross. **17**
- The critique. By Arlen Schumer. **18**
- Readers and critics respond. **20**
- The other box. By Rich Kortz. **24**

THE BACKSTREETS LINER NOTES

A pull-out supplement, our song-by-song look at the box. By Erik Flannigan and Christopher Phillips.

DEPARTMENTS

LETTERS

To the editors of *Backstreets*. **4**

ON THE BACKSTREETS

Don't Look Back. By Christopher Phillips. **6**

IN THE NEWS

Springsteen goes a-courtin' in the UK. **7**

ON STAGE

A pre-tour tour; initial E Street Band dates. **8**

ON LIPS

Reading is fundamental. **11**

GREETINGS FROM ASBURY PARK

Shore notes and news. By Robert Makin. . . . **12**

IN THE NEWS

New book on fans; Hall of Fame honors **13**

ON COLLECTING

The latest bootleg CDs. By Rich Breton. **26**

ON DISC

Tracks samplers and more. **28**

CLASSIFIEDS

Pen pals, messages, and tapes. **29**

COVER

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

circa 1974

Phil Ceccola Photo

OFF THE WALL

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

London, England, October 1998

Harry Scott Photo

LETTERS

MAN AT THE TOP

Dear Editor:

As always, the Hall of Fame-driven history flashbacks and commentary ["25 Years of Recorded History"] make for some good reading. In terms of the E Street Band and their needed entry into the Hall, who is it that really comprises this band? As *Tracks* makes quite clear, there were a lot of players in different roles throughout Bruce's recording and live career. The interchangeability of these players was part of the Jersey shore band community, I think, but also served to heighten the difference between Bruce and the E Streeters and a band like CCR, who grew out of time when words "community" and "sharing" were held to higher standards, even if out of innocent ignorance. By the time Bruce began his recording career, the lines between controlling artist and band were much clearer.

While Bruce relied on his band live, he directed its sound both onstage and in the recording process, even with contributors like Van Zandt, Landau, and Plotkin. There simply isn't any E

Street Band without Bruce, so I find the separation to be legitimate, as much as I agree that the Band kicks royal ass and has everything to do with much of the best music Bruce wrote and performed. But you can't have everyone in; too many members, too many different great stages to categorize (the Dead and Stones have none of these issues). Maybe the "Veteran's Committee" will get around to it in ten years or so, in some general fashion so everybody can be included, if the Hall can survive its current million-dollar losses per annum. Otherwise, I think Bruce will give a heartfelt thanks in his remarks and play "Rosalita" at the ceremony, with an incredible intro section for the band in the middle. I don't think musicians need much more than that.

Bill Kenney
Earlsville, VA

LIKED THE SAME BANDS

Dear Editor:

It's one in the morning here in Belgium, and a few seconds ago I finished reading the #60 editorial ["Blood Brothers"]. Call me emotional, but your article says what it's all about. In the article I read why I subscribed the minute I got your address, after several

years of looking for it.

I cannot agree with you more: I still think Bruce Springsteen is a better musician when playing with the E Street Band (as all the other members are). I'm sorry I cannot find the words to match my feelings as English is not my mother tongue, but as long as you maintain this way of thinking, I'll be a subscriber.

Gerry Vos
Riemst, Belgium

WHERE THE BANDS ARE

Dear Editor:

As a lifelong believer in the Boss (since 1972) I was touched by your editorial regarding why the E Street Band should be inducted into the Hall of Fame with Bruce in March. As someone who has had the privilege of seeing Bruce and the boys well over 100 times, Bruce and the E Street Band are one, regardless of what a group of corporate suits has to say. Personally, and I'm sure all Bruce fans will agree, the essence of the "Bruce Springsteen Experience" has always been and will always be Bruce and the band. As a group they represented a collection of true believers of a vision, in a world filled with blind people (fans of the Boss and the Band are entitled to

indulge themselves, at least I hope).

Howard Bloom
Ottawa, Canada

I GET THE MESSAGE

Dear Editor:

The editorial appearing in the recent issue of *Backstreets* is a powerful argument. However, I cannot forget the vast amount of music that Bruce has produced without the E Street Band. Half his albums are without them. No, not the "big ones," as you put it, but ones that are very close to my heart. I love the E Street Band; please don't get me wrong. However, as I was reading your listing of other artists who have fought for their bandmates to be nominated, I could not help thinking, "So, where is Bruce? Why hasn't he fought?" I think that his silence about the issue should serve as our message regarding his thoughts about the matter. If he is not up-in-arms about the lack of the E Street Band on the ballot, then I certainly will not be either.

Dina Snyder
via e-mail

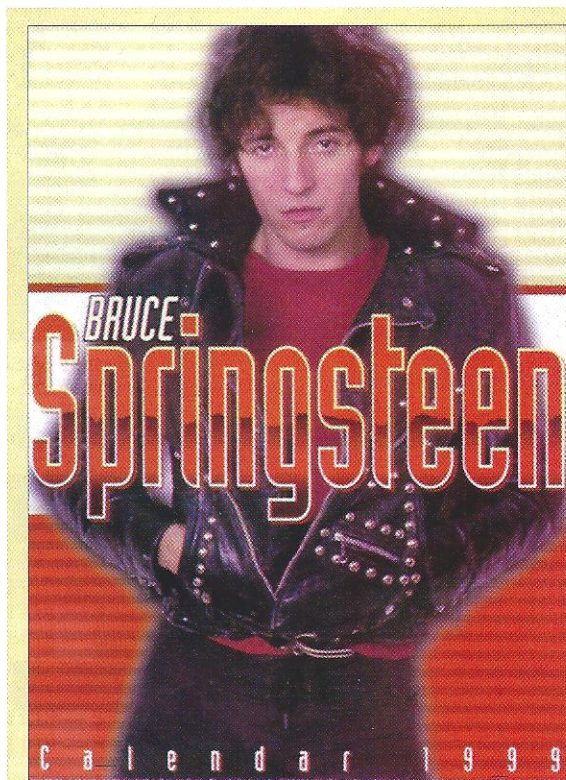
BRING ON THE NIGHT

Dear Editor:

Having been a huge Springsteen fan since early 1980 (I was 13), the most excitement and anticipation I've had for any album release was for *Tracks*. When I first read the track list in *Backstreets*, I noticed some obvious omissions, but refused to get all pissy about "why this song and not that." Everyone reading this magazine would have given several small body parts just to have a particular song from the box officially released.

On November 11, 1997, my mother passed away. When, a year later, the release date for the box was pushed up to November 10 [from November 17], my heart sank. I thought to myself, "Bruce always puts off his releases. Why can't he hold off on this one and just let me be miserable for that week?"

I picked up the box on the tenth and waited for my wife and 19 month old son to go to bed before listening to the box in full. By the time I got into the third disc, it was after midnight and I was having the most fun



1999 SPRINGSTEEN CALENDAR

1999: The year of Springsteen's Hall of Fame induction and the long-awaited E Street Band tour. The only official Bruce Springsteen 1999 calendar has a huge shot of the Boss for each month.

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ever listening to CDs.

I had heard "The Wish" before on a Christic Institute concert boot and saw Bruce perform it at the Beacon Theatre in New York, but I never *heard* it until that night. The imagery may be different, but Bruce always has a way of putting into words how I feel.

So early this November 11, I was able to remember my mom—not how she died, but how she lived.

Tom Verga
Ringwood, NJ

HANDS ME THE TICKET

Dear Editor:

At long last, we can all be excited about Bruce touring with the E Street Band. With this excitement comes the natural anxiety of getting good seats. There are those of us who have loved his music for a very long time in all its wonderful phases. I truly have loved it all: from the wonderful highs we used to get with the E Street Band shows through the enlightening experience of the *Tom Joad* tour.

What I am proposing is for Bruce to give us longtime, loyal fans a break! To find a way—through *Backstreets*, or whatever way he can—to let us true fans have a first crack at decent seats at his concerts. I recently talked to a Pearl Jam fan who told me that the fan club members always get an opportunity to get tickets first. Is there a way this can happen? I read that about 150,000 copies of *Tracks* have been sold so far. These were sold to the loyal fans, the regular people who are not going to go these concerts out of nostalgia, but out of true love. It would be great if he could find a way to help us.

Rena Thompson
Chalfont, Pennsylvania

SO YOUNG AND IN LOVE

Dear Editor:

Another spectacular job on issue #60—it's amazing how you keep uncovering those great cover photos, appropriate for the era of the issue and never seen or published before! I just love the whole *River* era: the recordings, the record itself, the lengthy and powerful shows, and even just the way Bruce and the band looked back then. I think it is

one of the most underrated eras in Springsteen history—it's sort of forgotten between the legendary *Darkness* tour and the mammoth *Born in the U.S.A.* period. I think the fact that there were no radio broadcasts from the *River* tour may have hurt it, and it was also overshadowed by the murder of John Lennon and the Rolling Stones' massive tour in the summer of '81.

I do have to disagree greatly with Arlen Schumer ["The Top Ten *River* Outtakes"] who writes of *The River* as "a major disappointment, falling victim to that which plagues most double albums..." I believe Springsteen's whole idea of releasing a double album was so that he could showcase his "fun" or lighthearted side. In so many interviews I read before *The River*, Bruce was constantly asked why his records didn't reflect the joy and fun of his live shows—stuff like "Fire," "Sherry Darling" or "Thundercrack." I think 20 intense, serious songs would have been too much.

I don't think "Roulette" fits in anywhere in the Springsteen catalog—it just doesn't fit into the story. Maybe it should have been performed at the MUSE show and released on the *No Nukes* record, but it wouldn't make any sense on *The River*. I also like the *River* versions of "You Can Look" and "Stolen Car" better than the unreleased versions. Don't get me wrong, I don't think the record is perfect—"Drive All Night" is pretty weak (at 8:26, no less) as is "I Wanna Marry You," and the version of "Point Blank" on the record pales in comparison to the *Darkness* tour rendition. "Take 'Em as They Come," "Cindy," "Restless Nights," "Loose Ends," and the longer "The Price You Pay" all should have somehow found their way onto the discs.

No matter what was on the record or left off, you'd get an argument. But to say the record was a "major disappointment" is off base. How many of us even knew of these tracks in the fall of 1980? I just remember being so excited when the Toronto radio station CHUM-FM had an advance copy—I listened all day to that station and just felt so happy!

Sean Cronin
Blasdel, NY

COME TOGETHER OFFICIAL CONCERT ITEMS

From last year's Red Bank, NJ, concert where Bruce Springsteen joined Steve Van Zandt, Max Weinberg, Clarence Clemons, Danny Federici, Jon Bon Jovi, Southside Johnny and a host of other Jersey musicians for a historic concert.

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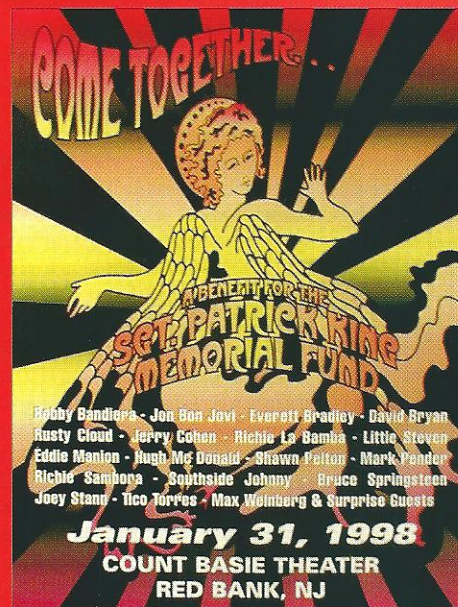


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Tore it apart and put it together again

Don't Look Back

By Christopher Phillips

It has happened again. It always does, so I don't know why it surprises me. Just when I start to take Bruce Springsteen's music as a matter of course—as something I write about, as one of the bigger spans on my CD shelf—I find myself excited all over again, goosebumps and everything. I always consider myself a Springsteen fan—that's pretty much a given. But every once in a while I'm struck by something that makes me feel like the unabbreviated *fanatic*, when I remember exactly why I got my mind blown by the guy in the first place.

This time it came when I was watching the recent *Legends* special—a few days after it first aired, thanks to the good-for-nothing cable service in my Seattle neighborhood that doesn't offer VH1. I only got to see the show when a friend in Minneapolis sent me a copy by Fed Ex. The timing didn't hurt: the E Street Band tour was just announced that week, and with a few extra days for the reality of it to sink in, the deck was stacked by the time I sat down on my couch. I wasn't sitting for long.

It's close to what I felt at my first Springsteen concert, more than half my lifetime ago, when I walked out into the night dazed, sure that my life had changed. That excitement, that real connection, usually strikes at the live shows. It's the same feeling I got at the first *Tom Joad* show I saw, 12/15/95 in Boston (the following night has the reputation as one of the best of the tour, but the 15th was a knockout, including the most chilling rendition of "Born in the U.S.A." I've heard). Television will do in a pinch—watching Bruce sing "Back in Your Arms" in the *Blood Brothers* documentary was pretty reinvigorating too.

Legends, on the other hand, could have been mere nostalgia. But it gave me more than just an off-the-moment thrill—one of the

best things about being a Springsteen fan is that excitement over 20-year-old footage can still feel more than anything like *anticipation*.

Springsteen is a rarity in that he's continued to make vital art for so long. How many other artists inducted into the Hall of Fame—with 25 years of work behind them—are still moving forward and reimagining what they can do with their music? Aside from getting the Dust Brothers to produce, I mean. Springsteen has constantly pushed his art forward with less and less regard for expectations. Having "proven" himself with commercial success several times over, he has been in the almost unique position of being able to move through it and beyond it.

After *Nebraska*, *Tunnel of Love* and *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, one hardly needs to make the case—though *Tracks* makes it pretty clear: even when you want him to, Springsteen won't sit still, won't stay with one style, won't stop pushing his work to make it something else. In his career moves, his albums, his tours, his interviews, Bruce has proven to be one of the most reflective artist of our time, and the least willing to risk stagnating or resting on his laurels. When he has looked back, it's been to either cast a suspicious eye and even laugh at the urge while acknowledging it, as in "Glory Days," or to recast old work in new light.

And now he has reformed the E Street Band, rehearsing at this moment. Considering every move Bruce has made has been an attempt to move forward—for better or worse—the E Street Band reunion can surely be no retreat. That's one main reason I'm so excited for the tour—because if even Springsteen is revisiting the past, he's sure to do it in a way that is new. To take what could easily be a nostalgia trip in someone else's hands—at a time when "reunion tour" conjures up cash-ins from the likes of the Eagles and Fleetwood Mac—

and take a trip forward instead. Sure, I'm as ready as the next guy to hear the Big Man wail (and reclaim the "Born to Run" sax solo?), to see Steve touring with the band again after 18 years ("Two Hearts?"). But even better will be one of the best bands around, with their instinct, experience, and years of shared history, tackling material they've never played live before, from *Tracks* to *Tom Joad*, and to see how Springsteen creates a context for all of it.

With the tour almost here, this is a good time to say again just how crucial reader input is to *Backstreets*—the magazine would literally not be possible without it. Much as we'd love to be at every show—and right now I'm saving pennies so that I can at least try—there's just no way to do it, even if we could get the tickets. So we count on reports from everyone—setlists, show comments, photos, newspaper reviews, ticket stubs, you name it—in order to cover the tour in full. Not only for the magazine, but also to help us give the most up-to-date news on our subscriber telephone hotline and website, www.backstreets.com. As we did for the first time with the *Tom Joad* tour, we'll cover the tour as it happens on the site.

If it's easiest for you to get in touch by e-mail, make sure to note the new e-mail address: editor@backstreets.com. When you catch a show, you can keep in touch with us by e-mail, by fax at (206) 728-8827, or by mail at PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115. Even when Springsteen isn't touring, the news that readers pass along is invaluable.

Special thanks this time to Johan Bjernick, Alberto Covin, Ralf Dissman, Ulf Ellestrom, Rich Feinberg, Lars Hansson, Linda Iorio, Ken Jarolem, Tommy Beck Jensen, Tom Lechner, Joe Lewin, Dan Marcus, Michael Martensson, Phil Martin, Antoine Mas, Lynn Mikulsky, Luis Moreno, Dave Norton, David O'Leary, Jeremy Parkin-

son, Jan Van Pelt, Alberto Poli, Bob Rizutti, Frank Schultz, Craig Scupp, Hal Selzer, Sheila Spaeth, Virginia Tixi, Salvador Trepatt, Biagio Troiano, Joseph Vernon, John Wooding and everyone else who helped out.

And thanks to everyone who sent in their thoughts on the box set. We've included page after page of reviews in this issue—in fact, this time out we've put everything on hold to cover *Tracks*. The "25 Years of Recorded History" retrospective will be back in issue #61, along with coverage of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction that inspired the series. We'll recommence next issue with 1984—and hope you'll renew if you need to to make sure you're still with us. Tour time is when you especially won't want your sub to lapse, and you can renew at any time to ensure you stay current.

To renew—or subscribe for the first time—by e-mail, we've changed our orders address too, it's now orders@backstreets.com. You can also renew directly through the backstreets.com website, by mail, by fax, or by phone at (206) 728-7603. Feel free to ask us when your subscription expires, or you can keep track yourself by checking your mailing label. The "X" number above your name and address will tell you the last issue of your current subscription—if your label says "X61," this issue is the last one of your current sub! Subscribing to *Backstreets* saves you money off the cover price, and it really helps support the magazine directly. Since newsstand distribution can unfortunately be spotty, it's the best way to ensure that you get every issue.

If you've heard all this before, thanks for bearing with the business talk—with the excitement lately we've had a lot of old readers come back into the fold as well as fans just discovering *Backstreets*. Some of this stuff we can't say enough, especially to thank you for your support of our efforts. See you on the road! 🎸

The judge put it all to rest

Springsteen Wins in UK Court

By Harry Scott

One of Bruce Springsteen's most important performances took place in front of one of his smallest audiences. There were only a couple of dozen fans and a similar number of officials in Court 17, of the Royal Courts of Justice in London, on the morning of October 8, 1998.

It was the third day of a fairly complicated legal action which Springsteen had instructed his solicitors to bring against two British music companies, Flute International Ltd. and Masquerade Music Ltd. The action concerned nineteen songs recorded in the early 1970s as demos, featuring a solo Bruce on guitar or piano, commonly known to fans as the "Prodigal Son" material. The songs had been released on CD by Flute and Masquerade under the title *Unearthed* and more recently as *Before the Fame*.

Even to someone brought up in Britain, the spectacle of the court scene was awe-inspiring: the sight of the judge and barristers in long wigs and gowns, the walls lined with glass-paneled bookshelves full to overflowing of leather-bound, encyclopedia-sized volumes. The main area of the court consisted of ancient oak-built pews sectioned off into the front area for the legal representatives of Bruce and of the defendants, with only two rows plus some standing room for the general public at the back.

Facing this was an imposing enclosed dais where court officials and stenographers were overlooked by the wily old judge perched high above on a throne-like chair of carved wood. The typically owl-like Mr. Justice Ferris seemed constantly on the verge of dropping off to sleep, only to spring suddenly with an extremely pertinent, often witty question whenever a point needed clarification.

Among the officials in the front row, looking for all the world like just another member



Springsteen goes a-courtin'.

of the legal team, sat Bruce: clean-shaven, soberly dressed in a dark suit, gray shirt and blue tie with only one stud in his right ear-lobe. He entered the courtroom a few minutes before the start of each day's business.

The first two days of the case were very tedious, consisting mainly of legal depositions with each side outlining their arguments. Although Springsteen was due to give evidence on the afternoon of the second day, business dragged so slowly that this was held over to the morning of the third. And so at about half past eleven, those of us lucky enough to have squeezed into the tiny public gallery found ourselves witness to one of the most famous rock stars in the world taking the stand in a British court to defend his "artistic integrity."

Bruce's basic case stood on the grounds that although he did indeed sign away his publishing rights to Mike Appel and Jim Cretecos in 1972, at various stages the titles had returned to him: Appel bought out Cretecos's

share of the business before Bruce took Appel to court in the acrimonious lawsuit of 1976/77, winning most rights immediately. He regained all copyrights fully from Appel in 1983.


Bruce may well have seemed relaxed and confident in the witness box, but he had some difficulty remembering the details of various agreements which were drawn up around May 1972. Though not as much difficulty as he had in dealing with the numerous binders of the documents gathered for the case, bundles which Bruce found almost impossible to handle.

Various other amusing incidents kept those of us in court entertained. When the defense attorney Guy Tritton asked Bruce if he needed to take a drink to clear his throat, Springsteen replied, "No, thank you, sir—I don't think it will help. I sound like this most of the time anyway." The room erupted with laughter which I imagine to be a very rare sound in such austere surroundings.

The defense repeatedly attempted to suggest that Bruce may have participated in private recording sessions for Cretecos, either at his apartment or at 914 studios. Bruce's patience eventually ran out, and he ended the line of questioning: "I know what you're getting at. Nice try, sir—but no."

Bruce talked at length about the lack of money in the early stages of his career, of being paid to drive Appel and Cretecos around and of staying on a friend's floor in a sleeping bag. When pressed on whether he felt he was defrauded of money, Springsteen explained that when *Born to Run* had been released, a lot of money had gone into Laurel Canyon, but little had come his way: "All I know is I was on the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek*, and I was broke!"

Bruce concluded his testimony by stating that the songs which were common to the infringing CDs and the upcoming box set

were vastly different due to the mastering. As well as the context: "I have told a long story throughout my career," he told the court, "and a big part of that story has been fashioned by the way the records have been released, as well as what is on them." 

THE VERDICT

The Boss was back in town nearly two months after the actual hearing, as Judge Ferris handed down the verdict on December 10, 1998. At 10:30 a.m., the waiting courtroom full of reporters, fans and law staff heard that Springsteen had won the copyright ownership in words and music of all 19 songs involved and copyright to the relevant sound recordings of 14 of them. The ownership of the other five songs, the Judge ruled belonged with his record company, Sony.

After the hearing, Springsteen told reporters: "I am very glad to come here and defend my right to my music, which is something I have fought for since I was young."

Although Springsteen was awarded £500,000 in costs from Masquerade Music and has the option of seeking damages of £2 million from the now-defunct Flute International, he stated: "The music that you come up with when you are sitting in your room alone with your guitar late at night is one of the most personal things in your life. I really didn't come here for the money, I came here for the music. It took a long time, but I will not hesitate to do it again."

True to his word, Springsteen is now taking action in the U.S., defending his ownership of the same material in a countersuit against Pony Express Records Inc. and JEC Music USA Inc.

—Herpreet Kaur Grewal

HARRY SCOTT PHOTO

Next time it's for real

Tracks brings Bruce to Europe



12/10/98: Play it again, Bruce.

By Christopher Phillips

With a new tour still months away and still just a glimmer in the eyes of fans, Springsteen followed up the release of *Tracks* with a preliminary strike: a brief media tour of Europe that he used to both promote the box set and announce the *real* tour coming in 1999.

The European promo blitz actually began here in the States, as Springsteen spent some time on his home turf with the BBC. Shortly before the release of the box, a camera crew from the BBC filmed a solo performance of "Born in the U.S.A." as Bruce played to an otherwise empty house at The Saint in Asbury Park. Springsteen has retooled this song acoustically several times, from the original acoustic rendering on *Tracks*, to the 1986 Bridge Benefit performance, to its regular slide-guitar workout on the *Tom Joad* tour. This performance brought yet another recasting of the song.

Appearing on the *Charlie Rose*

program a few weeks later, Springsteen gave fans in the US the first public taste of this latest "Born in the U.S.A." The footage from The Saint was used two weeks later in BBC2's special, *Bruce Springsteen: A Secret History*, which aired on December 5 and served to kick off Springsteen's quick swing through Europe. In each of five cities, Springsteen gave interviews and performed a song or two; "Born in the U.S.A." was performed at each stop of the publicity tour, sometimes joined by "This Hard Land."

Springsteen's first stop was in Berlin on a cold December 7—so cold, in fact, that he broke two strings while tuning his 12-string guitar. "Born in the U.S.A." was thus performed for German radio on a ten-string. After weeks of dodging the question, it was in Berlin that Bruce finally offered something positive regarding an E Street Band tour, saying that though details were still being ironed out, "we've been talking about it... and hopefully, I'm gonna have a good announcement for my fans pretty soon."

•10/11/98
Songs include *Shake Rattle & Roll*, *Jambalaya*, *Mystery Train*, *All I Have to Do is Dream*, *Chicken Shack Boogie* and *Red Headed Woman*
Colts Neck, NJ

•10/26/98
Born in the U.S.A.
for BBC's *A Secret History*
The Saint, Asbury Park, NJ

•11/4/98
Songs include *Shake Rattle & Roll* and *Pink Cadillac*
with Clarence Clemons
521 Sunrise, Palm Beach, FL

•11/20/98
Born in the U.S.A.
for *Charlie Rose*, PBS
New York, NY

•12/7/98
Born in the U.S.A.
for Radio EINS
Berlin, Germany

•12/8/98
Born in the U.S.A.
for *Sen Kvall Med Luuk*
Stockholm, Sweden

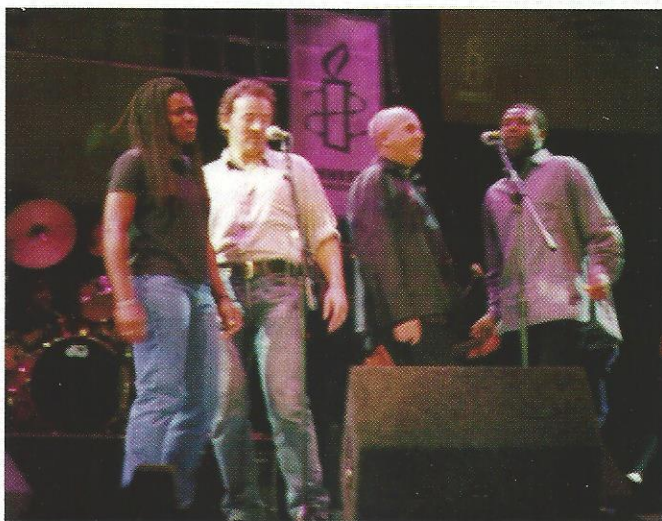
•12/9/98
Born in the U.S.A.
for *Nuelle part Ailleurs*, Canal+
Paris, France

•12/10/98
Get Up, Stand Up
with Tracy Chapman, Peter
Gabriel and Youssou N'Dour
The Ghost of Tom Joad
Born in the U.S.A. (aborted)
Born in the U.S.A. (full)
Working on the Highway
No Surrender
Amnesty International Concert
Bercy Stadium, Paris, France

•12/11/98
Born in the U.S.A.
This Hard Land
This Hard Land
for *Taratatà*, RAIUNO TV
Paladonna arena, Bologna, Italy

•12/14/98
Born in the U.S.A.
This Hard Land
for Spanish press conference
Teatro Real, Madrid, Spain

•12/21/98
Songs include *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town*
McLoone's Rumrunner
Sea Bright, NJ



12/10/98: The class of '88 gets up, stands up.

HARRY SCOTT PHOTO

FEDERICO BIERTI PHOTO

That announcement came the next day in Stockholm. While taping for the program *Late Night With Luuk*, he was finally able to answer the inevitable tour question with a "yes." Later that day, a press release from Springsteen's publicist confirmed the news.

Bruce's promotional tour hit Paris the following day, December 9, for French TV. A brief trip to London allowed him to be present for the High Court's verdict on December 10, returning to Paris that evening for his most high-profile appearance in recent months.

Bruce's itinerary coincided nicely with a reunion of sorts. In Paris, ten years after Springsteen toured the world with Amnesty International's "Human Rights Now!" tour, he took part in Amnesty's concert to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. Though the 1998 bill added other acts such as Radiohead, the concert's opening was a flashback to those 1988 shows. Springsteen joined fellow "Human Rights Now!" vets Tracy Chapman, Peter Gabriel and Youssou N'Dour—everyone but Sting present and accounted for—to start things off with "Get Up, Stand Up," as they had at each show of the tour a decade before.

Gabriel then introduced Springsteen, whose four-song acoustic set began the bill. Springsteen played "The Ghost of Tom Joad" and much of "Born in the U.S.A." before sound problems finally led him to stop mid-song. After sorting things out backstage, he emerged to take "Born in the U.S.A." from the top—for the third time that day, including the full version performed at soundcheck. The sound was never perfect, and he was on his fourth guitar by the time he introduced his final song, "No Surrender." When Bruce told the crowd that the song would be performed with "new meaning," he could have been referring to any number of battles: for

Human Rights, for his copyright in court that day, or for a guitar that actually works. The concert is slated for pay-per-view telecast in the US on April 3.

Springsteen resumed his series of promotional appearances the following day, with an interview and performance in Bologna, Italy. Taping there for a music program called *Taratata*, Bruce called for a double shot of "This Hard Land" to get it right. After a delay of several days due to fog—a problem that report-

edly caused the cancellation of an extra stop in Amsterdam—Bruce wrapped up the week with a press conference and performance in Madrid. Springsteen's next trip to Europe will surely be a longer one—and the sets should be longer too.

Not all of Springsteen's performances in recent months have been for the camera. A country band provided the entertainment at his belated birthday party at his farm in Colt's Neck, and the host joined them for one set. So, one sure way to get Bruce Springsteen to play your birthday party is... to be Bruce Springsteen. Guests included Steve Van Zandt, Max Weinberg, Jon Bon Jovi and Sheryl Crow.

A few weeks later the Boss was down in Florida, taking in Clarence Clemons' regular gig in Palm Beach. After watching the first set, Bruce joined the Big Man and his band to close out the second, playing with them for about 30 minutes. Songs included "Pink Cadillac," with a surprise guest vocalist: fan Rick Jarolem, pulled onstage when Springsteen forgot the words to the third verse.

Shortly before Christmas, Springsteen showed up down the Shore at the Rumrunner's holiday party in Sea Bright, NJ. Bruce celebrated with club owner Tim McLoone, Bobby Bandiera and other lucky revelers, with a set that included "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town." 🐉

Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band TOUR '99

This spring, after more than 10 years, Bruce Springsteen will be touring once again with the E Street Band—Roy Bittan, Clarence Clemons, Danny Federici, Nils Lofgren, Patti Scialfa, Garry Tallent, Steve Van Zandt, and Max Weinberg. The tour will continue through at least September.

March 4 brought Springsteen and the band to Convention Hall in Asbury Park, where rehearsals have been underway. Early reports say that the band is running through songs that span Springsteen's career, from old E Street Band concert favorites to material from *Tracks* never performed live and songs from the last decade getting the E Street Band treatment for the first time.

As of press time, dates for the initial European leg of the E Street band tour have been announced, the tour kicking off on April 9 in Barcelona. In all likelihood, these will *not* be the only European dates: additional shows were soon added in some of these cities to meet demand, and other cities still stand a chance too, as the European leg will probably continue past Madrid. According to the press release from Springsteen's publicist, "a final set of European dates for June will be announced shortly."

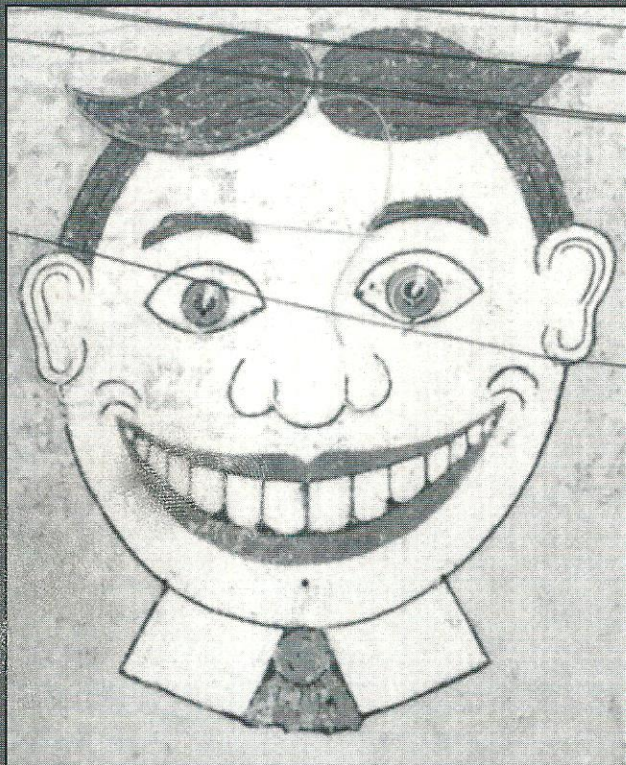
U.S. tour plans were put in very general terms: "In the United States, shows will begin in mid-July and will continue through the end of September. Springsteen and the E Street Band will perform multi-night series of concerts in select major cities nationwide. Further U.S. details will be announced shortly."

Springsteen added, "I'm looking forward to playing with the E Street Band this Spring and Summer. It's going to be a great time for all of our fans and for us."

April 9	Barcelona, Spain	Palau Sant Jordi
April 11	Barcelona, Spain	Palau Sant Jordi
April 13	Munich, Germany	Olympiahalle
April 15	Cologne, Germany	Kolnarena
April 17	Bologna, Italy	Polosport
April 19	Milan, Italy	Forum
April 23	Regensburg, Germany	Donauarena
April 24	Vienna, Austria	Stadthalle
April 26	Zurich, Switzerland	Hallenstadion
April 28	Lyon, France	Halle Tony Garnier
May 1	Manchester, England	Evening News Arena
May 2	Manchester, England	Evening News Arena
May 16	Birmingham, England	NEC
May 18	London, England	Earls Court
May 19	London, England	Earls Court
May 21	London, England	Earls Court
May 23	London, England	Earls Court
May 25	Dublin, Ireland	RDS
May 29	Berlin, Germany	Wuhlheide
May 30	Berlin, Germany	Wuhlheide
June 2	Paris, France	Bercy
June 5	Zaragoza, Spain	Romareda Stadium
June 7	Madrid, Spain	Estadio de la Comunidad

Additional tour dates, once announced, will be available immediately on the *Backstreets* subscriber hotline and the *Backstreets* website at www.backstreets.com.

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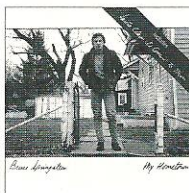
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BOSS CDs



•MY HOMETOWN/SANTA CLAUS CD SINGLE

Springsteen and the E Street Band's classic live performance of "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town" is finally readily and cheaply available on CD. A 2-track CD single, cardboard sleeve looks like the old 45.....\$4

•TRACKS BOX SET - JAPANESE EDITION

Same tracks, same basic box construction, but a few notable differences. The Japanese *Tracks* comes with two booklets instead of one—one booklet like the US edition but on thinner stock, and one booklet providing lyrics and information in Japanese. Both books fit together in the center pocket. Round gold and black sticker with Japanese type on front.....\$95

•**IN CONCERT/MTV PLUGGED CD** 13 tracks with the 1992-93 band, including official versions of "Red Headed Woman" and "Light of Day.".....\$14

•**LIVE COLLECTION VOL. I** This Japanese 4-track CD is the only place to find two essential non-LP B-sides on CD: the live versions of "Incident on 57th Street" and "For You." Also has the *Live* album's "Rosalita" and "Fire." Great packaging, too...\$32.50

•**CHIMES OF FREEDOM** Canadian CD-EP features four live Springsteen tracks from 1988: "Be True," "Tougher Than the Rest," "Chimes," and the acoustic "Born to Run," on a 5-inch CD with jewel box and PS.....\$18

•**BLOOD BROTHERS VHS, WITH BONUS CD** Documentary video packaged with a bonus 5-track CD5. **CD track listing:** Blood Brothers (rock version)/High Hopes/Secret Garden" (string version)/Murder Inc." (live)/Without You.....\$20

•**UK "SECRET GARDEN" CD5 #1** With Secret Garden (string vsn)/Murder Inc. (live at Tramps)/Thunder Road (MTV *Plugged*). Purple PS.....\$12

•**ONE STEP UP/TWO STEPS BACK 2CD SET** "The Songs of Bruce Springsteen" tribute, two CDs featuring 28 Bruce covers by other artists.....\$22

•**COVER ME** Classic compilation of Springsteen covers from Rhino on CD!.....\$16

•**WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE 2CD** The new tribute album, *The Songs of Pete Seeger*, includes Springsteen's cover of "We Shall Overcome.".....\$30

•**NO NUKES CD** The *No Nukes* concert has made it onto CD! 2CDs with all the music from the original 3-LP set, including Springsteen's "Devil With the Blue Dress Medley" and his duet with Jackson Browne on "Stay.".....\$30

•**USA FOR AFRICA/We are the World** Includes Springsteen and the E Street Band's live version of "Trapped" at the Meadowlands, 8/5/84.....\$18

•**THE CONCERT FOR THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME** 1995 live set includes Bruce and the E Street Band on "Shake Rattle and Roll," "Great Balls of Fire," and "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin On," the latter two with the Killer.....\$30

•**DEAD MAN WALKING SOUNDTRACK** Contains Springsteen's title track plus great exclusive songs from Tom Waits, Steve Earle, and more.....\$16

SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY

•**Spittin' Fire** 2CD set with 19 tracks, recorded live with a stripped-down acoustic band in the fall of 1995: from classic Jukes material to recent songs and great covers including Springsteen's "Fade Away" and "The Fever.".....\$25

•**The Best of Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes**.....\$18

•**All I Want is Everything: Best of 1979-1991** Rhino collection picks up where the above leaves off.....\$16

•**Hearts of Stone** The greatest record Bruce Springsteen never made.....\$12

•**Reach Up and Touch the Sky** Classic live album from '81.....\$12

LITTLE STEVEN

•**Men Without Women** The first one, with the Disciples of Soul.....\$16

•**Voice of America** Adds 2 B-sides.....\$16

•**Sun City** CD includes new liner notes from Steve and a bonus track.....\$17

GARY US BONDS

•**Dedication** Bruce and Steve produced and played.....\$16

•**On the Line** Again produced by Bruce and Steve.....\$16

•**RONNIE SPECTOR/Dangerous, 1976-1987** Import CD compiles 16 tracks covering Ronnie's "later years," including the two songs she recorded with the E Street Band, plus both live and studio versions of "You Mean So Much to Me" with Southside and the Jukes. Over 75 minutes.....\$22

•**KILLER JOE/Scene of the Crime** Mighty Max with his band Killer Joe, featuring Joe Delia (plus Little Steven, Jon Bon Jovi, and Benmont Tench of the Heartbreakers), includes "Summer on Signal Hill.".....\$15

JOE GRUSHECKY AND THE HOUSEROCKERS

•**Coming Home** New album includes four tracks co-written with Bruce: "Cheap Motel," "I'm Not Sleeping," "1945," and "Idiot's Delight," 13 tracks in all.....\$16

•**American Babylon** Produced by Springsteen, who joins the Houserockers on guitar, mandolin, vocals, and songwriting.....\$15

JOE D'URSO & STONE CARAVAN

•**Mirrors, Shoestrings & Credit cards** 17 tracks, with their first cover of "Bye Johnny Bye" (different from the version on *One Step Up*).....\$13

•**Glow** The latest from Joe D'Urso and Stone Caravan.....\$13

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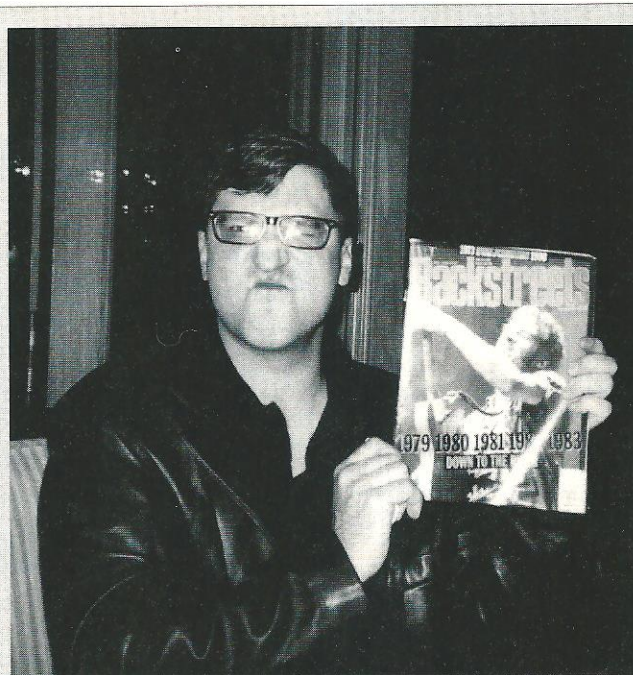
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PHILLIPS

NO ONE SEES ME: If you liked the around-the-campfire-with-Bruce nature of the *Tom Joad* tour, you should have been at the Count Basie Learning Center in Red Bank, NJ. For the second year in a row, Bruce Springsteen showed up to read to children at the Center's African-American Read-In. For this year's Read-In on February 6, he read from Ralph Ellison's masterwork, *Invisible Man*. As he did the year before, when he read Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem, "We Wear the Mask," Springsteen talked about what he read as it related to his own life and his struggles. The *Asbury Park Press* quoted Bruce as telling his audience, "I struggled with the pain of being unrecognized when I was young.... I was looking for a place to voice my anger, my joy and happiness. I didn't get into music to be famous or make money. I did it to find a purpose and meaning in life.... The work you do here [at the Learning Center] provides you with the tools you need to find out what you do well and develop your own voice to make yourself visible." The Read-In, part of a celebration of Black History Month, has been an annual event since 1989.... Springsteen also turns up as a guest on the new album by fellow rocker Mike Ness, leader of Social Distortion. Springsteen has often mentioned Social D. as a favorite, and for Ness's first solo album he shares vocals on a tune called "Misery Loves Company." According to a spokesperson, the album will be "a rockabilly/roots punk thing" titled *Cheating at Solitaire*, due on April 13.

MAKING TRACKS: Talk about long time coming. Back in 1984—and it wasn't the first time he'd said this kind of thing—Springsteen told Kurt Loder, "We record a lot of material, but we just don't release it all.... I always tell myself that some day I'm gonna put an album out with all this stuff on it that didn't fit in. I think there's good material there that should come out. Maybe at some point, I'll do that." Almost 15 years later, the long-awaited *Tracks* debuted at #27 on the Bill-

board chart. Since the set consists of four CDs, it was soon certified platinum after sales of 250,000 copies rather than a million.... *Tracks* is certainly a boon to fans, with 55 previously unreleased songs. But the lack of any actual new material—the box intentionally only covers released-album sessions, and the sole newly recorded song since the *Tom Joad* sessions was actually written for *Human Touch*—may make you wonder what Springsteen has been up to in the studio for much of this decade. In a *Time* magazine interview by Christopher John Farley, Bruce discussed a wealth of new material that has yet to be released: a country album recorded at the same time as *Tom Joad* in 1995 that Bruce says combines "roots country and West Texas swing music"; a hip-hop influenced album using samples and loops; plus an acoustic album and an electric album that are both nearly complete. Springsteen told Farley he wanted to put out new music "sometime before the end of the century." Let's hope that doesn't mean 2015.... Springsteen granted several other *Tracks*-related interviews to magazines such as *Rolling Stone*, *MOJO*, and *Record Collector*. For television, he talked with Charlie Rose for a hour broadcast in full on PBS. NBC's Bob Costas was also granted an interview, which lasted roughly 2 hours, but only a fraction of it was broadcast in pieces on *Dateline NBC* and the *Today* show. The good news is that Costas is returning to his old late-night program, *Later*, for a stint beginning in May, and he plans to air the talk with Springsteen as part of a series of his best interviews.... While *Tracks* has rightfully gotten the lion's share of attention, it's a little ironic that Springsteen's move back to his home state of New Jersey is generating much less press than his "sell-out" move to Los Angeles some years back. Springsteen talked to *People Online* about heading back to Jersey on a more permanent basis: "The thing is, I have a big family here. That's how I grew up... with aunts, uncles, grandmothers all around me. I think it's healthy for kids to be around people who do something different. That way you're not growing up with the music business or the entertainment business."



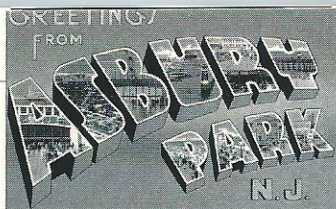
GREG DULLI of the AFGHAN WHIGS PICKS HIS BRUCE TOP 5:

1. Brilliant Disguise
2. I'm on Fire
3. Born to Run
4. Jungleland
5. The River

CRAZY MIRROR: By now you've probably picked up a copy of the *Songs* book—flipped through the lyrics, checked out the pictures, pored over Bruce's newly written mini-memoirs. But have you held the book up to a mirror? No, it won't show anything in 5-D, but it will reveal more than the book probably intended. On some of Springsteen's handwritten documents reproduced in the book, the other side of the sheet has "bled through." A little time with a looking glass reveals song titles from "Child Bride" to the never-heard-of "Blue Moon Turns to Gold."... When Patti Smith recently played the Fast Lane in Asbury Park, she made sure to send out "Because the Night" to a certain hometown hero: "We'd like to dedicate this to the man who helped write it. We hope he's doing well, and we send this little tribute out to Bruce Springsteen."... Quite a few other women artists have been paying their own tributes to the Boss lately. Mary Chapin Carpenter covered "Dancing in the Dark" on her recent tour, a slow, moving interpretation that's been getting raves. Heather Nova works "I'm on Fire" into her encores,

and Patty Griffin (be sure to check out her latest, *Flaming Red*) is performing "Stolen Car".... A recent episode of *Dawson's Creek* used "Sad Eyes" twice, with the box set plugged at the end of the show—though no one will admit to actually watching it.... Johnny Cash's 1983 album *Johnny 99* has just been released for the first time on CD, and the album cover alone makes it worth picking up. Even better are the Man in Black's takes on both the title track and "Highway Patrolman"—evidence that, with *Nebraska* brand new at the time, Mr. Cash knew a good thing when he heard it right away. *Johnny 99* is available on Koch Records.... Rage Against the Machine raised a few pierced eyebrows when they began covering a Springsteen song, "The Ghost of Tom Joad"; a new DVD from the band has both studio and live versions.... After covering "Youngstown" a couple years back, bluegrass boys Dean Sapp & the Harford Express are tackling Bruce again, this time with "Sinaloa Cowboys" on *Living in a Crossroads*. Contact Dean Sapp/Old Train Music at (410) 885-3319 or 1-800-246-3319.

—Christopher Phillips



The Pony may be closed, but...

Asbury Park "Spirit" Alive and Well

By Robert Makin

Sometimes you have to take the good with the bad.

When it comes to the sounds of Asbury Park, the bad news is that the Stone Pony is closed. The brief experiment called Vinyl, an upscale dance club, failed miserably. Owner Steve Nassar is MIA.

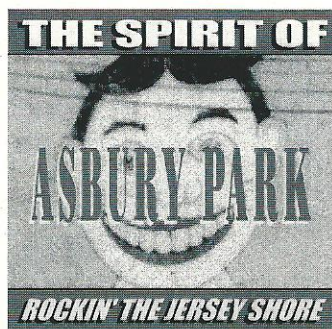
The good news is that the club is for sale. Sonia Grill Realty in Deal has listed the Pony at \$1 million. The realtor can be contacted at (732) 531-3221. If the right person gets their hands on the club, it could be a real shot in the arm for the classic Asbury Park music scene.

Former Pony DJ/manager Lee Mrowicki, now a manager at Freehold Music, hopes that's what happens. "I really think if it's done right, it really could be a room for national acts again and for the players who always played there," Mrowicki says. "Every time I see someone from the old days, they always comment how they wish the Pony was like it was. But if it isn't done right, it dies."

Sonia Grill Realty says that no one has yet expressed serious interest in buying the Pony. It's questionable whether the veteran scene can compete with the hardcore punk/heavy metal contingency that has staked a claim in Asbury Park. The first-ever March Metal Meltdown by the promoters of the infamous Milwaukee Metalfest is taking place there because Asbury has become such a viable punk and metal haven, promoters say.

Perhaps the forthcoming compilation, *The Spirit of Asbury Park — Rockin' the Jersey Shore* will provide some leverage for the scene's veterans. The disc is due in early spring from the Central Jersey-based Halycon Records, folks who have also put out discs by such local vets as T.T. Quick, a Pony regular, and Prophet.

The Spirit of Asbury Park will include tracks by Glen Burtnik,



Cats on a Smooth Surface (the Vinnie Daniele lineup), George Theiss, Cahoots, Lord Gunner, Acme Boogie Company, Norman Seldin (with Clarence Clemons, Garry Tallent, Max Weinberg and Danny Federici), Bystander, Joe Vadalà, The Diamonds, Sonny Kenn, Hot Romance, Paul Whistler, Billy Hector, Norman Nardini and Lance Larson. The songs are all original, some dating back to the '70s and some recently recorded.

Mrowicki and Bobby Bandiera Band/Adrian Dodz bassist Hal Selzer helped Halycon owner Rob Rizzi put the *Spirit* compilation together. "If it gets a good response, we hope to do a volume two, with some more of the better-known artists included," Selzer says.

Mrowicki contributed to the compilation's liner notes: "Although Asbury Park is only surrounded by water on three sides, by two lakes and the Atlantic, it was always more like an island... musically isolated and unaffected by fads of the day. While NYC had its punk and Philly had its disco, the boys in the Park looked to the Masters for inspiration. In the '70s, we were listening to Howlin' Wolf, Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson, Sam & Dave, James Brown, Dion, the Memphis and Atlantic sounds, and dressing in three piece suits, fedora hats, and earrings, mixed in with leather jackets and newsboy hats.... Then, in the '80s, we started greasing our hair back or letting it grow, depending if your influences were rockabilly or the British invasion.... and wearing

cutoff shirts, tight jeans, and cowboy boots. There was never a real, one-and-only "Sound of Asbury Park"... there was a mixture of many styles. But whatever came out of the Park, whether it was music with horns and gravel-voiced singers... or sweet Roy Orbison tones with twangin' guitars, or long hair, loud guitars, and four-part Beatle-like harmonies... it always kept people on the dance floor and wondering if someone would show up to jam or if they were watching the next band to follow the Boss into the big leagues. There was the beach, there was the great music, and there were fabulous times at the Jersey Shore. These songs bring it all back."

For more info about *Spirit of Asbury Park* visit Halycon's website at www.w2.com/docs2/c4/halycon.html.

Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes packed Tradewinds in Sea Bright once again on New Year's Eve. The South had planned to record with Garry Tallent in Nashville this summer, but those plans have been put on hold because of the E Street Band reunion.

"Gary is the reason I moved down here," Southside recently told the *Asbury Park Press* about moving to Nashville in 1995. "I thought it would be good to be close to him. He's a great friend, and I want him to produce the next album. I guess I won't be doing it any time soon, since apparently he'll be busy."

"I can't blame him. Who wouldn't want to play in the world's greatest band? I'll wait for him, because I know he'll help me make an honest, basic album. That's all I want. In the meantime, I'll stay busy."

Southside, who hasn't released a studio album since 1991's *Steve*

Van Zandt-produced *Better Days*, plans to embark on an acoustic tour with Jukes guitarist Bobby Bandiera, along with Kevin Gordon also on guitar and Rick Schell on percussion. It's a different four-piece than captured on his *Spittin' Fire* live set from 1997, but the similarly stripped-down sound should go over well.

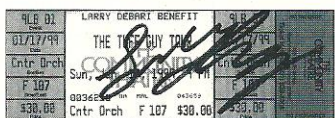
Southside also recently played a benefit with Richie "LaBamba" Rosenberg's big band as well as Al Kooper & the ReKooperators, among other Jersey faves, for Larry DeBari. DeBari, a cancer victim, was one of LaBamba's Hubcaps who also played with the Miami Horns in Phoebe Snow's band. The benefit, dubbed the "Tuff Guy Tour," was held at The Community Theatre in Morristown, NJ.

Van Zandt made his acting debut—"very Jersey, very Italian-American," says *Daily Variety*—with his role as Silvio Dante in the HBO series *The Sopranos*. The first two episodes were screened at a Big Apple premiere party on January 7, attended by such friends as Max Weinberg, Bruce Springsteen and Patti Scialfa. At the event, Springsteen confirmed that his old guitar-slinging pal would participate in the upcoming E Street Band reunion, adding that guitarist Nils Lofgren also would take part.

About *The Sopranos*, a comedy about North Jersey gangsters, Springsteen told the *Star-Ledger*, "It felt very real."

Van Zandt added about his first acting gig, "It's funny. I know I should have been nervous, but I wasn't. I think maybe that's because film is a shared experience. It's collaborative. It's not like being a musician, where it's all on you."

"Stevie" Van Zandt, as he is credited in the television show, has also recently unveiled an official website, including a great career overview written specifically for the site. Check it out at www.littlesteven.com.



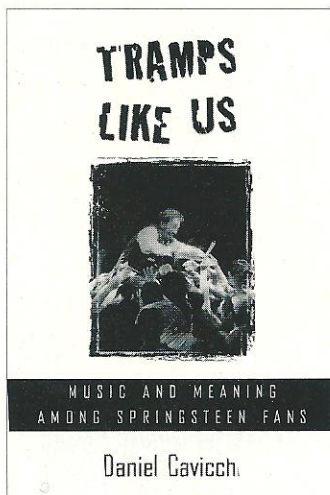
New book on fans

Check Our Look in the Mirror

By John J. Kelly

Not to be lost in the flood of recent Bruce Springsteen releases *Tracks* and *Songs* is a new book that any Springsteen fan should put on their required reading list. Ethnomusicologist Daniel Cavicchi—himself a longtime Springsteen fan, professor of History and Music at the Rhode Island School of Design and *Backstreets* subscriber—has written *Tramps Like Us: Music and Meaning Among Springsteen Fans* (Oxford University Press). Talking about his new book, the author says that he has long been bothered by the perception and portrayal of fans in the media.

"Anytime you see something about fans, it's about a celebrity stalker or an hysterical mob at a concert," Cavicchi told *Backstreets*. "The truth is that a fan is basically somebody like you or me. What makes Springsteen fans unique is their loyalty and respect. They know that Bruce is a 'non-star star,' and because he is so true to himself, fans stay true to him."



Cavicchi conducted hundreds of interviews with Bruce Tramps all over the world and uses a mix of fan stories and sociological data to bring new understanding to how fans are initially attracted and continually inspired by Springsteen.

"In many ways, becoming a fan is like a religious conversion," Cavicchi notes. "And thereafter are so many things fans do that parallel spiritual activities. Like going on a pilgrimage to the Jer-

sey Shore. Or having a shrine at home or work to Bruce. I also spoke with others who became fans over a longer period of time and are more casual about their devotion."

Cavicchi says fans not only establish a strong connection with Bruce and his music, but also with other Springsteen fans. Friendships are established at concerts, in line waiting for tickets and even trading tapes.

"One fascinating thing I found was, despite the intensity of Springsteen interest, there is also a very healthy amount of self-regulation by fans," says Cavicchi. "Everyone I interviewed had a healthy understanding of the danger of becoming obsessed. And they seem to know when to pull back."

Tramps Like Us, based on a doctoral thesis, is more of an academic read than most of the Springsteen books you'll find on the shelves. But for the "Tramps" in question, Cavicchi's book is a fascinating reflection, providing a better understanding of why we are fans, what it means, and how it improves our lives. ➔

Two halls are better than one

Hall(s) of Fame to Induct Bruce

Call it karma: On November 10, 1998, the same day that *Tracks* was given to the world, Bruce Springsteen got something in return. That same day brought the official announcement of his election to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Like his box set, Springsteen's Hall of Fame induction also celebrates 25 years of recording.

The announcement came as no surprise to most—Springsteen was generally considered a shoo-in for the Hall, even in his first year of eligibility—but that certainly doesn't diminish the honor.

As for how he got the news, "I think my aunt told me," Springsteen told an interviewer a few days later. "She's 80 years old. She goes on the Internet. That's how I found out."

The ceremony will take place at New York's Waldorf Astoria on March 15, 1999. The event will air at least in part on VH1, at a later date to be announced.

Springsteen's fellow Hall of Fame Class of 1999 members are Billy Joel, Curtis Mayfield, Paul McCartney, Del Shannon, Dusty Springfield, and the Staple Singers. Bob Wills & the Texas Playboys and Charles Brown will

be inducted as Early Influences, and Sir George Martin will be the only Non-Performer honored.

The Songwriters Hall of Fame is also inducting Springsteen this year, just a few months after the Rock Hall festivities. Their 30th annual awards dinner and induction is also being held in New York, on June 9, where Springsteen will be honored specifically for "Born in the U.S.A." and "Streets of Philadelphia." His fellow inductees will be Peggy Lee, Tim Rice and the late Bobby Darin. ➔

—Christopher Phillips

the backstreets jukebox

1. Bruce Springsteen
Tracks
Columbia (4CD)

2. Wilco
Summer Teeth
Reprise (CD)

3. Kelly Willis
What I Deserve
Rykodisc (CD)

4. Jason Falkner
Can You Still Feel?
Elektra (CD)

5. Sleater-Kinney
The Hot Rock
Kill Rock Stars (CD)

6. Steve Earle &
the Del McCoury Band
The Mountain
E-Squared (CD)

7. Sebadoh
The Sebadoh
Sub Pop/Sire (CD)

8. Built to Spill
Keep It Like a Secret
Warner Bros. (CD)

9. Patty Griffin
Flaming Red
A&M (CD)

10. Paul Westerberg
Suicaine Gratification
Capitol (CD)

10

Monster
Discs to Play Today
and Everyday

TRACKS



PHIL CECOLA PHOTO

Bruce Springsteen finally releases legendary outtakes: Four CDs, 66 songs, a lot of girls and cars, and even more expectations. *Backstreets* follows the *Tracks*.



Top: The untouched, original photograph used for *Tracks*, revealing a portion altered for the album cover (detail above). The photo was taken in 1974 in the basement of The Main Point, Philadelphia, PA.

I first heard unreleased Bruce Springsteen songs in 1983, and I still have the cassette compilation a friend sent to me. There's no chronology to speak of: outtakes from *The River* on side one, followed by older material like "Zero and Blind Terry" and "Seaside Bar Song." But that tape galvanized my enduring interest in Springsteen's shelved material. Not only were they outstanding compositions, they also conveyed how hard Springsteen worked on his records.

Why would Springsteen wait until now to release songs that fans begged for, some even he considered favorites? Timing has been a factor. Here's an artist who, over the course of 25 years, has made a lasting contribution to the culture; worked with unusual passion and intensity; been the conscience of popular music; and had a significant impact on a lot of people. The passage of time allowed Springsteen to complete a story cycle, assemble a series of songs that reflect four themes, and present it as the corollary to finished records.

Now, outtakes (or "finished masters," in Trackspeak) have a time line, not to mention state-of-the-art sound and the right words. That's not a bad way to upgrade from vinyl treasures like *By the River*, marginal quality cassette recordings, or multi-volume overkill like *The Lost Masters*. Moreover, *Tracks* allows Springsteen to more clearly define how he worked over the years. It's hard to imagine songs as powerful as "Take 'Em As They Come" or "Wages of Sin" being left off an album. But Springsteen is a storyteller, and if a song didn't fit the narrative he was constructing, to the vault it went. *Tracks* presents Springsteen as a prolific songwriter, an intuitive bandleader, an attentive narrator, a tough editor, all things he is known for. Rather than exploring social or life issues, as he did on his records, *Tracks* lets the artist tell another story: his own.

At any point, Springsteen could have dipped into his backlog of songs and released the odd EP (which, in fact, he has). But doing so more often might have deprived him of the opportunity to do more with these songs than just put them out. Anything less than *Tracks* would have been anti-climactic. Anything more, like a wholesale airing of unreleased songs, wouldn't have made much artistic sense.

And with *Tracks*, Springsteen finally acknowledged the great family secret: that the songs on the shelf deserved a better fate.

It's rare that an artist can tell a career-spanning story with songs that didn't figure into carefully structured records. But *Tracks* clearly traces the major differences in Springsteen's song styles, themes, and producing techniques, from his 1972 audition for Columbia Records to last summer's revival of "Gave It a Name." That progression isn't just implied, it's audible. And, for better or worse, *Tracks* doesn't cover up much: when the material isn't particularly good, or when one era stands out against another, you hear that, too.

Broken down, the story unfolds like this. Disc one: the birth of a songwriter; disc two: the evolution of a band; disc three: the range of ideas they addressed together, as rock's conscience and premier ensemble; disc four: chucking it all and starting from scratch.



here sound great, capturing a young songwriter's enthusiasm and the listener's interest.

Disc one is the only place where the proceedings feel rushed. After all, it literally is Bruce the songwriter "growin' up," and even 68 minutes seem slightly inadequate to go from the Hammond sessions through *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. Be that as it may, most of the songs here are first rate compositions. "Zero and Blind Terry," a dramatic story of forbidden love, sounds particularly glorious. "Santa Ana" features a brilliant intro; "Rendezvous" passes muster (but belonged on *Live 1975-85*), and "Don't Look Back" screams as loud as it did more than 20 years ago.

"Thundercrack" is a disappointment: there must be a live version somewhere in release quality, and as the show-stopper of Springsteen's early performances, it would surpass the studio version found here. Although Bruce plays a superb guitar solo midway through, his background vocal at the beginning sounds suspiciously unlike he did in 1973, when the track, or at least most of it, purports to have been recorded. Springsteen admitted some remedial work for *Tracks*; "Thundercrack" was mentioned as one such song. Overdubbing isn't a bad thing necessarily, but when a song has Bruce's voice as it sounds today on a song that was supposedly recorded a quarter-century ago, there's a problem.

Other inclusions break the mold of records for which they were recorded. "Give the Girl a Kiss," a horn-driven rave-up, would have been out of place on *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. The song takes shape partly from the 1977 tour and shows that Springsteen was still in that "Action in the Streets" mood at least some of the time while working on an album that was definitely not about fun. Here, Springsteen makes good on his "invitation into the studio" on the nights not necessarily reflected on finished records.



Springsteen scrapped *The Ties That Bind* in 1979: with the band playing so well, why not go back to the drawing board to find the right songs?

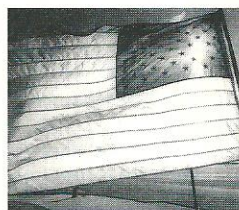
Straight ahead-numbers like "Restless Nights" kick hard. Springsteen plays a stunning solo, and Max Weinberg follows with a fill that's equally impressive. But more often in this era the E Street Band showed its mettle in different ways. For example, "Dollhouse" is an ordinary *River*-era rocker, an earnest coming-of-age song that chugs through two verses and choruses. But when the band hits the bridge with a burst of saxophone, the song becomes something else.

The bridge takes its shape from the drumming and the saxophone, with Springsteen, through vocal

Tracks begins where it should, with Columbia Records A&R legend John Hammond, in effect, announcing Bruce Springsteen to the world. The four demos

cues, arranging. But it isn't typical 4/4 time playing. Rather, Clarence Clemons and Max Weinberg play off one another, while everyone else waits it out. When the bridge ends, the song stops for a moment (something of a rarity, actually) before the next verse begins.

Given the band's growth in the recording studio, it's ironic that the second disc ends with Bruce Springsteen experimenting by himself in his Los Angeles home studio. Note that the third disc ends in a similar fashion four years later. In between came superstardom. But what if *Born in the U.S.A.*, about which Springsteen wrote of harboring mixed feelings in *Songs* (the fine collection of lyrics, photos, and essays that forms a companion piece to *Tracks*) had been different?



Disc three illustrates the choices Springsteen had. What should this record be? Dark? Pop? Funny? Political? Passionate? It became all of these, with something for everyone.

Tracks perfectly reflects all of *Born in the U.S.A.*'s attributes. There's humorous fluff ("TV Movie"), raw passion ("My Love Will Not Let You Down"), studied compassion ("Car Wash," with Springsteen writing from the point of view of a presumably single mom), and the usual dose of girls ("Cynthia") and cars ("Brothers Under the Bridges"). Disc two collars the gutsy demo of the title track.

One of Springsteen's best songs finally surfaces here: "Frankie," first performed in 1976, recorded for *Darkness* and again, this time for the ages, for *Born in the U.S.A.* "Frankie" is an evocative song about the search for self-purpose and love. We never discover whether Springsteen's character really makes out in the end (which would have made it a good fit for the latter album). But the E Street Band gives a performance for all time. As the playing gracefully unfolds, one might envision the flag coming down, the rain, the want ads out on Chelsea Road. Age was good for this song, and its revisiting is another high watermark: the band plays at a slower tempo and with more feeling, and Springsteen's vocal sounds more mature.

"Wages of Sin," a painfully detailed account of derailed love, is the other side of "Frankie." Small-town images of innocence and wonder shape "Frankie"; "Wages of Sin" has a more sophisticated, urban feel. One asks questions about "what I'm gonna find," the other counts the shards of the relationship. One's on disc two, the other disc three, but only four days separate their given recording dates. Whatever the connection (if any), "Wages of Sin" is a chilling look at a relationship gone wrong, how the past influences the present (with an altered verse borrowed from "My Father's House," Springsteen's starkest take on father/son relationships). Men and women out of the cars, indeed.

That's where Springsteen's characters found themselves as the 1990s dawned. No longer on the run, they began to explore relationships, domestic life, and the accompanying gray areas. Seeking new ideas and sounds, Springsteen dismissed the E Street Band. The earnestness of songs from this era is

BY jonathan b. pont

TRACKS the backstreets review



undeniable, but the result was a mixed bag—and so is disc four.

Two straight ahead, riff-based rockers, "Leavin' Train" and "Seven Angels," open the disc. The performances are professional to a fault, undistinguished. Other songs from this era sound alike. Witness "Over the Rise," accented by a dull bass line and brief flourishes of synthesizer. And "Goin' Cali" not only comes from the same musical mold as "57 Channels," but also doesn't sound much like a "finished master." Rather, it sounds like something that should have been pushed further. In fact, it was, as "Living Proof." The latter, one of Springsteen's best songs from the early '90s, probably doesn't require this proof sheet.

"Gave It a Name" is a bit of an anomaly: Springsteen had recorded the song for *Human Touch*, but the master tape couldn't be found, so it was re-recorded last summer. That Springsteen thought enough of the composition to cut it anew makes it a worthy inclusion. It, too, sounds more like a demo, but it goes from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament to the modern day without missing a beat. And once again, Bruce borrows from Pete Dexter's novel *Paris Trout*. This version also makes the closest pass to songs that weren't recorded for specific records, those Springsteen opted to leave off *Tracks* for the sake of the uniformity.

One song not found here was one of Springsteen's most interesting songs from the early '90s, "30 Days Out." A sleek, bouncy rocker that sounded like "Tunnel of Love" meets "The Long Goodbye," this 1992 B-side had a peculiar mix and sounded curiously compressed. But its unique sound had a great groove, great lyrics, great everything. It's one song that will probably be lost, and one that could have really gained from remixing and remastering. Moreover, it captured Springsteen at his best with new musicians, something disc four could have used.

Occasionally the material on *Tracks* proves Springsteen's method of selecting songs for records to have been right on the money all along. There isn't a single song on disc three, for example, that would have made *Tunnel of Love* a better record. Different, sure. But better? No way.

Those songs, including the underrated "Lucky Man" and Springsteen's moving tribute to his mother, "The Wish," belong right here. They illuminate the ideas and emotional terrain he considered when writing for that album, but saved for release until now. When Springsteen got it right with his albums, he did so in a way few artists in music have. *Tracks* surely reinforces that. And when he second guessed himself later on, as he did with "Be True" and "Roulette"? Well, they're here, too.

Initially, the news that previously released B-sides would appear on *Tracks* was a letdown. Precious slots taken up by songs already out there? Such heresy! But Springsteen B-sides have been a fan's dream and occasionally even let a vinyl seven-inch tell a compelling story ("Born in the U.S.A." b/w "Shut Out the Light" particularly qualifies). Allowing "Roulette" to languish as a decade-old, out-of-print B-side would be unthinkable. Here, it takes its rightful

place as perhaps the greatest, or at least the most-fabled "unreleased" song in Springsteen's canon.

Furthermore, most fans in the mainstream either missed or don't recall songs like "Janey Don't You Lose Heart" and "Johnny Bye-Bye." Why not make room for these gems? They sound great, they fall in just the right places, and some aren't even the previously released version at all: witness the odd extra verse, the fresh mixes that make a couple of these sound quite different [see the *Backstreets* liner notes in this issue for more details].

But B-sides also have an unintended effect: they show the limitations of songs Springsteen elected to include on *Tracks*. Some of these songs just aren't as good as the B-sides left off the box. That becomes apparent on disc four.

Whatever musical shortcomings *Tracks* contains are minor. And if Springsteen chose to leave off songs because he was dissatisfied with the recording ("The Promise") or just didn't like the song ("The Fever"), it's clearly his prerogative. Most fan favorites made the cut anyhow: 9 of 15 songs that *Backstreets* readers identified as "favorite unreleased songs" appear here, and another, "Murder Incorporated" emerged on *Greatest Hits* in 1995.

Since *Tracks* made a statement, perhaps Springsteen could now embark on a sort of semi-regular release of unreleased material in less structured way. The concept of including only songs that relate to a finished record, along with Springsteen's comments in *Time* magazine last fall regarding other projects in the works, indicate that more adventurous material remains in the vault. In time, at least some of it ought to come out.

Bruce Springsteen spends a lot of time making his records, sometimes too long, but more thought should have gone into this set's physical presentation. Storage is one problem, leading many fans to come up with homemade solutions to keep *Tracks* with the rest of their CD collection. *Live 1975-85* was reissued in a smaller, conventional-size box; how long will it be before *Tracks* gets a similar treatment?

The unwieldy, tri-fold box and flaps covering each volume make removing a disc an ordeal. And that's before the shoddily constructed box falls apart. The booklet suffers from the same packaging impracticality: it slips easily from its center space and is easy to lose. But the booklet's run-of-the mill artwork doesn't

compensate much anyhow. Some photos appeared already in tourbooks. Others run straight to the gutter, rendering Bruce Springsteen himself nearly invisible. In a retrospective as important as *Tracks* purports to be, there is no excuse for that.

But the most glaring problem with *Tracks* is neither the music nor the packaging. It's the lack of liner notes. A three-paragraph note in the front of the booklet provides only meager historical context. Springsteen has since explained that he wanted listeners to hear this material with no preconceptions—like songs on a new album, with no outside narration to weigh them down. But the deliberate structure of *Tracks* and the inclusion of previously released songs reveal conflicting motivations: these songs do have a historical context, and, structured this way, practically beg for explanation. For an artist who spent as much time making this music as Springsteen did, and then intriguingly presenting it as an "alternate route," it's not asking too much for more detail.

Without help from the artist himself, one can hardly fault the average music fan for concluding that *Tracks* is outtakes rather than "finished masters," or for being confused about where some songs fit into Springsteen's story. Consider "Be True": there is no explanation of the song's evolution, its connection to "Mary Lou," its near-inclusion on *The River*, or its surprising resurrection for the *Tunnel of Love* tour. Nothing even indicates that it was a B-side. Or, what does Springsteen recall about the John Hammond sessions? What is remarkable about "This Hard Land" that saw it embraced—twice on record, to say nothing of live performance—more than ten years after it was shelved? Why do lyrics appear in more than one song? Was "Lion's Den" recorded for *Born in the U.S.A.* or for Gary U.S. Bonds? True, *Songs* answers some of these questions. But the best place for them, especially as they relate to these songs, is the record shop, not the book shop.

These aren't arcane questions to which only die-hards would want to know the answers. Rather, they add dimension to the music, and would be illuminating for anyone who shelled out for the set in the first place. Even a disc-by-disc synopsis for *Tracks* would have been better than nothing. The music isn't hindered by the absence of notes, but the story is. In most instances, Springsteen lets his music speak louder than he does, figuratively and literally. *Tracks* is no exception. ➤

VINI "MAD DOG" LOPEZ q&a by robert makin

HOW DID YOU END UP ADDING TO THE REMIXES OF 'TRACKS'?

Bruce called me up and said, "Hey, I have some music from the early days. One of the songs needs vocals, and I was wondering if you wouldn't mind coming in after all this time and doing it." I said, "No, I'd be glad to." So I went to his studio by his house and did the vocals. It took 40 minutes. We had a good time, just like the old days.

WHAT SONG DID YOU DO?

We did "Thundercrack." He wanted the original guys to sing on it, so me and Federici went in. It was terrific. He makes you feel right at home. But it was like "Star Trek" in that one room! We did a lot of dancing. I hadn't heard that track in 25 years. It sounded good to me. We all had fun. I knew all my parts like there wasn't any time in between, like we were just there again, like a time warp.

WILL YOU BE PART OF THE E STREET BAND REUNION TOUR?

I suppose if they did a local show, they'd bring me in to do a few songs, but I'm not going on any tour, not as far as I know. I have a real good job. With my caddie master position at the Deal Country Club, a lot of people depend on me. I do a specific function that only I do. I just can't go jumping around the world, not unless retirement is in the near future.

It would be fun to play, if I get my chance at the Meadowlands. Maybe he'll invite me down to play a couple shows. Or at the Spectrum. But I'm not going on any long, major tour with him as far as I know. I'm just glad to be on *Tracks*. I had one of the only ten copies in the world when it first came out as a thank you.

readers' m.i.a. picks

Backstreets has yet to take an official poll, but that didn't stop readers from sending in lists. Below are some picks for favorite songs still missing in action.

1. Thunder Road (acoustic)
2. Janey Needs a Shooter (Darkness outtake)
3. The Way
4. The Promise
5. Losin' Kind
6. Child Bride
7. The Big Payback
8. None But the Brave
9. County Fair
10. Unsatisfied Heart

Doug Baker
Columbus, OH

1. Thunder Road (acoustic)
2. The Promise
3. The Way
4. Fire
5. Because the Night
6. Cindy
7. Losin' Kind
8. Child Bride
9. Sugarland
10. Follow That Dream

Anders Wester
Sweden

1. White Lies
2. Follow That Dream
3. Preacher's Daughter
4. Point Blank (alternate)
5. County Fair
6. Unsatisfied Heart
7. The Promise
8. Sugarland
9. Chain Lightning
10. None But the Brave

Mark McKinney
Greensboro, NC

1. The Fever
2. The Promise
3. Cindy
4. Held Up Without a Gun
5. Cindy [sic]
6. Protection
7. None But the Brave
8. County Fair
9. Sugarland
10. Follow That Dream

Tom Oliver
Clarion, PA

1. The Promise
2. The Fever
3. Preacher's Daughter
4. Unsatisfied Heart
5. County Fair
6. Spanish Eyes
7. Protection
8. Evacuation of the West
9. Marie
10. Trouble River

Mike Walk
San Antonio, TX

After 66 freshly released tracks, what still remains for a sequel? Plenty.

It couldn't have been more than an hour after news leaked of the songs that would appear on *Tracks* before fans started talking about what might be on *Tracks II*. It's not exactly that longtime Springsteen followers were ungrateful for the often-dreamed-of box set *Tracks*; it's simply that Springsteen's pool of songs is so huge that any selection by its very nature has to exclude some choices. Even Bruce himself had trouble editing his vast catalog down to the four *Tracks* CDs: At one point the set was planned to be a six CD box, to include 100 songs.

The good news is that Springsteen has acknowledged in several recent interviews that he hopes to release more outtakes in the future. He's even starting sooner than expected: the upcoming *18 Tracks*, a highlights disc from the box, will reportedly see a couple of the box set's most glaring omissions released at last. The commercial success of *Tracks* suggests a future *Tracks II*, simply because Springsteen now realizes there is a large fan base that will buy his unreleased material. Bruce has also stated, in this latest round of interviews, that he might consider following the lead of the Grateful Dead who began to release live material from their vault a few years ago with the *Dick's Picks* series. Springsteen has said many things in interviews before that never seemed to happen (around the time of *Darkness* he said he'd like to release an album a year), so one can only hope he's good to his word this time. The actual appearance of *Tracks* is probably the best indication that one day there may be a *Tracks II*: Less than ten years ago the idea of any Springsteen box set of outtakes was out of the question.

If there ever is a *Tracks II*, what might be the possible line-up and concept? Clearly, Bruce would have to abandon the idea that he says he used in selecting the songs for *Tracks*: Picking only songs that had a connection to an album. This was part of the reason Bruce has given for not including "The Promise" and "The Fever" in the first place, and though those two songs will be released on *18 Tracks*, they may still be the place to begin with *Tracks II*. Springsteen said that he wasn't happy with any of the recordings he had in the can of "The Promise," which is why he rerecorded the song for *18 Tracks*. "I went back and listened and we never really got a good recording of it, in my opinion," he told one interviewer. "We had a very plodding, heavy-handed version—I couldn't live with it." We can hope that Bruce's mind may change over time: The studio versions that have leaked into collectors' hands already are phenomenal, and the live versions, with Bruce playing the song on piano, would no doubt please collectors as well.

"The Fever" is another song that might also benefit from a release of a live version. When Bruce put together *Tracks*, the set was designed to only include studio recordings, but even here he snuck on two live songs, so it's not hard at all to imagine a box set that mixes live and studio tracks. The recent *John Lennon Anthology* is an example of a box set that succeeds partially because it combines rare studio and live tracks together to present a full doc-

ument of a performer's working career. For Bruce, one need look no further than the recent bootleg *Deep Down in the Vaults*, which mixes studio tracks and live cuts to create an overview document that tells a story not told on *Tracks*.

The Lennon box set also makes use of many early demos, in contrast to *Tracks*, which only uses finished recordings of songs. But clearly there is interest in some of the earlier drafts of Springsteen's songs; imagine the power of hearing an early demo of "Tougher Than the Rest" recorded on piano. There are numerous examples of early demos that have already leaked into the hands of collectors (simply look at *The Lost Masters* series of bootleg CDs), but many more must exist within Springsteen's own vaults. Even though *Tracks* touches on most of Springsteen's album sessions, it does leave out some essential material from the 1983 solo recordings, the 1987 country sessions, and the 1995 E Street Band sessions.

As for songs that could be considered besides "The Promise" and "The Fever," the list is long indeed but must begin with "The Way," "Preacher's Daughter," "From Small Things," and "Follow That Dream." These are the songs that in the past have ranked high in *Backstreets* polls asking fans what unreleased songs they most want to see officially issued. From the early years other prime candidates would include "If I Was the Priest," "Southern Son," "Arabian Nights," "Janey Needs a Shooter," "Shoot Out in Chinatown," "Winter Song," and "Action in the Streets." From the late '70s and early '80s one can imagine "Child Bride," "Losin' Kind," "Cindy," "Protection," "None But the Brave," "Vigilante Man," "Unsatisfied Heart," "Delivery Man," "County Fair," "Richfield Whistle," "Sugarland," and "The Klansman." A few songs from *Live 1975-85*—"Because the Night," "Fire," and "Seeds"—have yet to be released in studio form.

Of the few known songs from more recent years, "Trouble River" from the *Human Touch* sessions is slated as the third bonus track on *18 Songs*, but imagine live tracks from the Christic Institute show featuring different versions of "Real World," "Soul Driver" and "Red-Headed Woman." And then there are the many other B-sides and assorted one-offs and rarities that have already been officially released but have yet to be compiled as many of the other B-sides on *Tracks*: "Held Up Without a Gun" (the one B-side that has yet to show up on CD at all), "The Big Payback," "Trapped," "Chicken Lips and Lizard Hips," "High Hopes," "Dead Man Walking," "Missing," and "We Shall Overcome." And what about "Viva Las Vegas," one of Bruce's most rousing rarities and one that's hard to find on CD?

The list of what could make up a *Tracks II* is only as big as your imagination. It's no exaggeration to say that there are easily three more CDs of quality material. Since *Tracks* set the stage for the reunion of Bruce and the E Street Band and their impending tour, wouldn't *Tracks II* make a great way to end the tour two years from now? Maybe that seems too far-fetched to imagine but wasn't that what we were saying about *Tracks* just a few short years ago? ➤

BY **charles n. cross**

TRACKS letter from an alternate universe

August 1998

Dear Bruce,

Let me begin this letter by first thanking you immensely for giving me the opportunity to critique *Tracks* before you release it. I'm honored that, based on my prior "Top Ten Outtakes" articles for *Backstreets*, you've chosen me to represent all those fans who, for over twenty years, have sought out (at great expense) your unreleased songs. Fans who have listened through all the hisses and the scratches and the dropouts, and hoped against hope that one day you would reward our steadfast diligence and devotion by releasing them--and that that day would be in our lifetime. It's hard to believe that day is almost here.

You've requested that I scrutinize your choices of outtakes, check them against any other versions, as well as offer substitute selections you might have overlooked. I won't pull any punches in speaking my mind, Bruce--I trust that someone like yourself, who has demonstrated the utmost integrity throughout his recording and performing career, would expect nothing less from me.

DISC ONE:

I love the way *Tracks* begins, with John Hammond introducing you on "Mary Queen of Arkansas," but I don't think you need to include all four of these *Greetings* demos. Two would suffice (keep in mind that so many of my decisions are based on the limited song-space four CDs allow; I would substantially alter my thinking if *Tracks* was the six-CD collection it was originally slated to be--any truth to that rumor?). Moving on, I've always liked "Bishop Danced" because it reminds me of Tom Waits a little (especially the way you sing the lyric "Champagne... a round for all the old choir boys").

Now we come to the three classic outtakes from 1973, "Santa Ana," "Seaside Bar Song," and "Zero and Blind Terry," in their "finished" forms. Of the three, only "Seaside" sounds

pretty much the same as the outtake I've been listening to all these years. I really miss the beautiful flute solo in "Santa Ana"--one of the highlights I would always point out to new fans and non-fans alike as an example of the off-beat instrumentality in your early work. And I think you totally overdo the "oh-oh-oh" background vocals in "Zero," practically trampling over your soft, subtle, hushed singing at the end of the song. I'm curious: were these overdubs recorded, and these songs "finished," back in '73 or in '98? In many ways, the most revealing graph-

ic in the *Tracks* packaging you previewed for me is the ghosted image of the typeset song listing, with handwritten notes on overdubs, etc. I'd like to see more of that, along with detailed liner notes on each song--I'm sure you're planning on including those.

I was startled--jarred, really--when I heard this "Linda Let Me Be the One." If this indeed was the version you intended for *Born to Run*, no wonder Mike Appel, as legend has it, blocked the exit of the recording studio, refusing to move until you put "Meeting Across the River" on instead! Compared to the "Linda" I've always loved, with its languorous, twangy guitar figure, I find this take heavyhanded, with Roy's thudding piano smothering everything in its path. Even your vocal lacks the sensitivity and aching quality found on the former "Linda."

While it was a nice surprise to hear a previously unknown (to us!) studio version of "Thundercrack," you sound a little logy in the studio. I think the live version from Joe's Place in Boston, January '74 (from which an incredible soundboard copy just surfaced on the bootleg *Deep Down in the Vaults*--I'll send you a copy if you don't have it) blows this away. The band's vocal and instrumental machinations, and your guitar interplay, sound wilder--yet tighter--in the live take. Obviously, since you've included "Bishop Danced," you wouldn't be averse to including another live cut.

But when it comes to "Rendezvous," I wish you'd do the reverse, and replace the 1980 live version with the '77 studio outtake. Though it's notoriously missing the opening vocal line, I trust you can overdub. If you feel you have to have "Rendezvous" live, consider the '76 Palladium version instead--the bells, Garry's driving bass and your vocal harmonizing with Steve all stand out, making this track definitive, compared to the rote '80 take. In addition, the latter's *River*-era arena sound comes completely out of left field, sandwiched between studio outs from '73 and '77. This brings up a tangent about your song sequencing throughout *Tracks*--it's neither organized by songwriting order nor by recording order. With a retrospective like this, you may want to consider letting recording order take precedent--as on your *Live 1975-85* collection--so one can better "track" the growth process of you and the band.

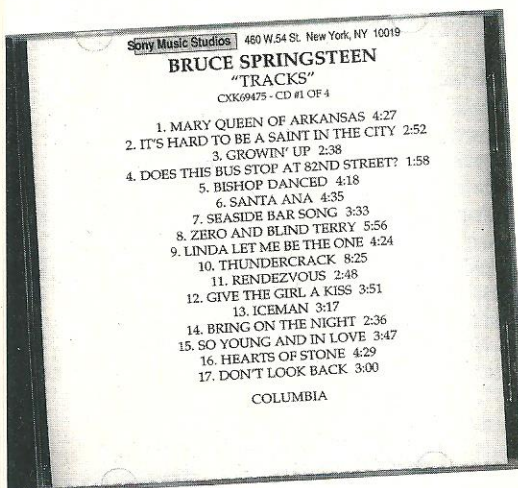
"Give the Girl a Kiss" is so by-the-numbers and comes dangerously close to self-parody. If you want a rave-up from your *Darkness* era, "Goin' Back" is so far superior to "...Kiss" that it boggles the mind. While "Iceman" and "Don't Look Back" didn't make my personal "Top Ten *Darkness* Outtakes," I can respect their inclusion--but I would choose your remarkable demo of "Fire," the explosive "Preacher's Daughter," or the awe-inspiring "Janey Needs a Shooter" in their stead. Come to think of it, I like the great alternate-take "Candy's Boy"--where you lead the band on a distinctively different, long, loping, mellow jam--and the rock 'n' roll version of "Racing in the Street" better as well.

"Bring on the Night" is on a par with the other *River* outs that you've surfaced, like "Dollhouse" and "Living on the Edge of the World," and would work better sequenced with them on disc two (more on these later). "So Young and in Love" is great, of course, but the recording date on the preliminary liner notes you sent me of 1/74 has to be a typo; it must be from after Max and Roy joined the band, particularly because it sounds almost exactly like the live "A Love So Fine" from the Main Point, 2/75. The song so fulfills the category of "raveup" that it makes tracks like "...Kiss" (and disc three's "Lion's Den") sound even more lightweight than they already are--so you could easily make room for more deserving outtakes of a different variety.

Like "The Fever" and the acoustic "Thunder Road," two songs I cannot believe you're not planning to include on *Tracks*. Both are so classic; the former is practically a pop standard, equal to the Peggy Lee song it's an homage to, while the latter is an unqualified gem, forecasting all of your future acoustic work. At first, I thought maybe these songs weren't here because, based on your tentative track list, you didn't want to include material you've given to other artists or alternate versions of your released songs. Yet the inclusion of both "Hearts of Stone" and the alternates of "Born in the U.S.A." and "Stolen Car" belie that theory. I would be mortified if either "Fever" or "Thunder Road" acoustic is missing from this collection, and I'm sure I speak for countless others as well.

DISC TWO:

Based on my "Top Ten Outtakes" reviews for *Backstreets*, the *River* outtakes are to my mind better represented on *Tracks*--seven out of ten, versus only four of ten of the *Darkness* outtakes--so I'm personally glad to see



them make it to official release pretty much intact, with a few notable exceptions.

"Where the Bands Are" sounds less exciting—slower, even lethargic—than I'm used to hearing, but that could be more of a perception problem because you've sequenced it right after "Dollhouse," another "fast" song. "Where the Bands Are" might sound peppier following a ballad or slower track—or better yet, opening disc two instead of "Restless Nights," thus announcing the *River* outtakes with a statement of purpose. Why "A Good Man is Hard to Find (Pittsburgh)" follows "Restless," instead of being sequenced with the rest of the *Born in the U.S.A.* outtakes, is beyond me.

Speaking of "Restless," the "new" background vocals at the end smother your wild vocal howling and guitar playing with the E Street Band at full-tilt right alongside, one of the best moments of this fantastic song. Another fantastic *River* outtake, "Loose Ends," is damaged tremendously by that heavyhanded layering of keyboards over your opening guitar salvo, such a great feature of this song, so pristine-sounding on your aborted '79 album *The Ties That Bind*. Instead, it sounds like you've "finished" the earlier "Loose Ends" mix that begins with someone at the board announcing, "This is mix #1: original vocal and original sax."

This version of "Ricky Wants a Man of Her Own" sounded new to me, but I'm afraid it's also too keyboard-heavy compared to the "Ricky" I've been used to. That outtake has your guitar more up-front in the mix, and generally sounds brighter—like the way your vocal hiccups at the end of the line, "Mamma says 'Son, talk to her, she'll listen to you.'" Perhaps this is because you've noted *Tracks*' "Ricky" as coming from the *Darkness* sessions, while my favorite version comes from the *River* era—or so I've been led to believe all these years.

"Roulette," "Take 'Em as They Come," "Be True," "I Wanna Be With You," "Mary Lou," and "Stolen Car" all sound just like the much-circulated (and much-loved) outtakes, without any of the additional overdubs and remixes that I feel have marred the others I've mentioned.

Of the "new" *River*-era outtakes, "Living on the Edge of the World" is an eye-opener, a combustible mixture of Bobby Fuller Four's "I Fought the Law" and early Ramones (and sounds more like a "response" to the Ramones than "Hungry Heart" does!). I like "Wages of Sin" because, in addition to its off-beat, atonal, pre-Chris Isaak aural quality, it's a great hyper-dramatic metaphor for the disintegration of a relationship, much like "Loose Ends." "Wages" would couple well with the wide-eyed innocence of "Cindy," noticeably missing from this tentative *Tracks* lineup; surely you're not thinking of leaving that one off! Especially for songs like "Bring on the Night" and "Dollhouse" which, while both have their good points, are pretty redundant-sounding. Like disc one's "Give the Girl a Kiss," do you really need these songs here in place of, for instance, your rockabilly version of "You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch)"? If you want to present an "alternate route" as you said in that intro bit you sent me, how about the revelatory, rocking version of "Point Blank," with the kind of blistering guitar solo that wasn't found on the entire *River* album!

DISCS THREE AND FOUR:

Those neglected *River* outtakes would nicely fill out disc two, allowing you to begin your *Born in the U.S.A.* section properly: with the great acoustic rendition of the title song leading off disc three, instead of where it's currently sequenced. Of course, that would necessitate dropping a few of these "new" *Born in the U.S.A.* outtakes or B-sides, but that shouldn't be a problem, as there are quite a number of questionable selections.

Unless you're planning on a *Tracks II*, I would dispense with the bulk of your more-available B-sides (none of which I've ever been too crazy about, with the exception of "The Big Payback" and "30 Days Out," both of which haven't been included!) to make room for such unreleased nuggets as

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

"TRACKS"

CKX 69475-CD #2 OF 4

1. RESTLESS NIGHTS 3:44
2. A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND (PITTSBURGH) 3:15
3. ROULETTE 3:51
4. DOLLHOUSE 3:31
5. WHERE THE BANDS ARE 3:43
6. LOOSE ENDS 4:00
7. LIVING ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD 4:17
8. WAGES OF SIN 4:51
9. TAKE 'EM AS THEY COME 4:28
10. BE TRUE 3:39
11. RICKY WANTS A MAN OF HER OWN 2:44
12. I WANNA BE WITH YOU 3:21
13. MARY LOU 3:21
14. STOLEN CAR 4:26
15. BORN IN THE U.S.A. 3:10
16. JOHNNY BYE-BYE 1:49
17. SHUT OUT THE LIGHT 3:51

COLUMBIA

"None But The Brave" and "Follow That Dream," the ethereal "Unsatisfied Heart," the sublime "County Fair" and especially the awesome "(Drop on Down and) Cover Me," which I think happens to be one of your greatest songs and guitar solos.

I'm sorry, but none of the previously unknown *Born in the U.S.A.* outtakes deserve inclusion over those songs. I've already dissed "Lion's Den" as a throwaway (for you, of course—lesser artists like Huey Lewis would've built an entire album around it). "TV Movie" sounds almost exactly like "Stand on It," and is therefore another sequencing mistake—if you're intending to demonstrate that this was a musical theme you were exploring during the *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions, I think it's backfiring. Besides, your version of "From Small Things" is better than both of them put together! "Car Wash" sounds too much like "Darlington County"; "A Good Man..." like "Highway Patrolman"; "Brothers Under the Bridges ('83)" seems like a hybrid of "No Surrender" and "Bobby Jean" (with a soupçon of Dylan's "I Want You") but is better than neither (too many "lai-lai-lais" in the chorus?). "Rockaway the Days," while interesting lyrically as usual, goes nowhere musically—it's just a single riff repeated throughout the song, with minor instrumental layering.

Of the *Born in the U.S.A.* outtakes we've heard before, "Cynthia" seems to suffer from the same problem as "Where the Bands Are." Maybe we've been listening to these songs at the wrong speed all these years (always a possibility with bootlegs), but something of their urgent energy has been sapped in their transition from outtake to released *Tracks* take. Neither song sounds as explosive coming out of my speakers. To a degree, the same could be said of "My Love Will Not Let You Down," but that's because you didn't choose the more "finished" outtake that begins with the great Sting-like "Synchronicity" vocal howl and has your double-tracked harmonies on the choruses, which help give this incredible song a greater expanse, and hence its power.

On behalf of all the fans who have always loved the '82 "This Hard Land" and were disappointed by your retake on '95's *Greatest Hits*—the consensus was that your new vocal strained a little over-the-top—I want to thank you for resuscitating the more understated, quietly powerful "original" version for *Tracks*. I wish you would do the same for "Janey Don't You Lose Heart," and put out the more driving '82 take with the great instrumental coda fade-out and Steven on backing vocals, instead of the draggier '85 B-side. You've selected the beautiful '82 "Frankie" over my personal favorite versions of the song, the shimmering '76 live debut or the (lyrically unfinished) '77 studio take, but, like "Thunder Road," it's a great song in all its forms. As is "Man at the Top," which, in this mid-tempo studio track, is delightful but a bit lightweight; I would give anything for the familiar '84 Alpine Valley, Wisconsin live cut in clean, soundboard-quality sound. There, the song has an epic feeling (and an arrangement) that fulfills its potential as a true folk song for our time.

Well, Bruce, I guess I'm about finished. I'd like to see you find room for two outs from the *Human Touch* sessions: the "I Wish I Were Blind" version with you trading off vocals with Bobby Hatfield, and "Trouble River." But the songs left on disc three and the entirety of disc four don't really have alternate outtakes for me to judge against, so I'll leave it to others in your camp to give you feedback. Thanks again for this tremendous opportunity. I guess it's of little or no consequence to either of us if you don't incorporate any of my suggestions into the final song list, indeed, if this version of *Tracks* is the one you release.

I'll still cherish my bootlegs of the great material you don't.

Your fan always,

Arlen Schumer

Arlen Schumer

Sony Music Studios 460 W. 54 St. New York, NY

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

"TRACKS"

CKX 69475-CD #3 OF 4

1. CYNTHIA 4:13
2. MY LOVE WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN 4:46
3. THIS HARD LAND 4:46
4. FRANKIE 7:22
5. TV MOVIE 2:45
6. STAND ON IT 3:05
7. LION'S DEN 2:18
8. CAR WASH 2:06
9. ROCKAWAY THE DAYS 4:40
10. BROTHERS UNDER THE BRIDGES ('83) 3:19
11. MAN AT THE TOP 3:19
12. PINK CADILLAC 3:33
13. TWO FOR THE ROAD 1:57
14. JANEY DON'T YOU LOSE HEART 3:31
15. WHEN YOU NEED ME 2:34
16. THE WISH 5:14
17. THE HONEYMOONERS 2:04
18. LUCKY MAN 3:31

COLUMBIA

TRACKS the critics respond

Roger Catlin
The Hartford Courant

In a season when the other major boxed-set release, *The John Lennon Anthology*, combines studio outtakes, various live performances, embryonic demos, false starts and chatter—however fascinating historically—*Tracks* is a surprisingly strong four-disc package of finished songs that are very near the quality of the stuff Springsteen has released, if not better.... Had they been released before, some of these songs would be rollicking bar-room standards by now.... Rock is too much a young person's game for tracks even as strong as these to affect the course of modern music by now. But I imagine there's a load of fans who have kept the faith all these years and will be richly rewarded.

Steve Morse
The Boston Globe

Boxed sets flood the market every fall, with new ones coming out seemingly every week. But none tells more about the inner workings of an artist than *Tracks*, already being called the Holy Grail of boxed sets. It's easy to see why, because it boasts a staggering 56 previously unreleased songs that track Springsteen from a cocky Bob Dylan acolyte to a mature, self-realized artist with an acute ear for promises broken and fulfilled.

What's apparent is that Springsteen left more good songs off his studio albums than most composers write in their entire recording careers. No wonder he's agonized so much over his albums. He's had to make hard choices in deleting some absolute gems, which are finally collected in this project. Sure, there are some songs that should have been left in the vaults—but most will be an ear-opening experience for anyone with the faintest love of the prolific poet-rocker from the New Jersey shore.

Paul Tatara
CNN On-line

Over the course of *Tracks*, you can hear Springsteen wrestling with his tendency towards overt emotionalism. Whereas other artists try to expand on their vision with each new release, Springsteen started methodically cutting back—first lyrically, and then musically—and has continued to do so since *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. That's certainly a brave thing for a popular artist to do, but, for all its obvious sincerity and ambition, his most recent album, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, is basically the toothpick that's been whittled out of a fondly remembered redwood.

That former bigness of spirit is why then-critic Jon Landau famously called Springsteen "rock & roll future" after seeing one of his routinely passionate live performances in 1973. Springsteen sparked imaginations by looking back as he simultaneously barreled ahead, full-throttle down the American cultural highway. We needed him to drive, and a great many of us were ready to pile in and take the ride. His was a music of possibilities.

One hopes that those possibilities will reemerge in his work after this grab-bag visit with the unbridled urgency of his youth.

Thor Christensen
The Dallas Morning News

Most rarities albums are packed with fizzled experiments, ho-hum alternate versions and sundry tunes that just weren't strong enough to put out. But what sets *Tracks* apart is the volume of songs that are as good as—if not better than—tunes that made it on to land-

The improved sound quality of the songs I had heard before ("Where the Bands Are," "Don't Look Back," et al.) was just so amazing that I was dancing around my apartment. But what surprised me was that there was actually a new song that managed to take the place of the best-ever Springsteen song in my heart from such classics as "Unsatisfied Heart," "Backstreets" and "The Ghost of Tom Joad." That song is "Happy." For me, it sums up everything that Bruce Springsteen's message is about: the world can really push you around and break you so that you think you'll never be whole, but then you find people who help you find your place in the world again. "Happy" is the ultimate love song because it doesn't portray relationships as fairy-tale things but as something real.

As I listen to *Tracks*, I'm happy to see that Springsteen has continued to become a better writer and a storyteller with the years. As great a song as "Zero and Blind Terry" is, it cannot compare with "Loose Change" when it comes to really touching the listener's soul and giving her/him a taste of the real world that's out there.

Johanna Pirttijärvi
Pomarkku, Finland

The first disc is worth the fifty bucks alone. "Linda Let Me Be the One" is better than anything but "Thunder Road" and the title track on *Born to Run*.... Springsteen could have as many top ten singles as the Beatles if he wasn't so concerned with making a *big statement*. I'm not sure I mind.

"The Wish" is remarkable, although the lyric sheet points to how hastily and sloppily this was put together. "Hatred on Bond Street"? That's the most beautiful passage in the whole package, and nobody read over the lyric sheet before it got printed? If I was carefully guarding these songs and then finally decided to release them, I'd make damn sure everything was perfect.

Funny, I often refer to myself as "meat."

I use disc four to serve cookies on. I appreciate he was going through some dramatic re-evaluations, but all the music from 1990 and 1991 sucks. It didn't get good again until the breakthrough with "Happy." "Back in Your Arms" was overproduced. Vietnam was thirty years ago, I don't want to hear about Vets in the trees in the 1980s. He should have ended it with the band and "Back in Your Arms" (as it was on the *Blood Brothers* video).

So, briefly: Disc one is a masterpiece; two is good; three, we're slipping a little; four is a frisbee.

David Billotti
New York City

Like many fans, I had a sense of euphoria in anticipation for the set's release, which turned to mixed emotions during my listenings. Though I applaud the idea and its fruition, I can't help but feel that this release was rushed out for the Christmas blitz and to cross market with the *Songs* book, and thus dollars superseded their most important commodity, the fans. If more time was taken for this major event, fans the world over could have been so much more fulfilled and the set so much better. In comparison to other "unreleased" sets, the important scope of this project doesn't seem to be reflected in the information provided about the sessions, the photos and liner notes. If the discs were

TRACKS the readers respond

supposed to have some sense of "period" to them, how did tracks from the same period end up on different discs? Why jump from one period to another and back again?

One brilliant move, however: the set was made using High Definition Compact Disc (HDCD) technology. For a Bruce fan and audiophile, this is a dream come true. The sound of the set is tremendous and makes one yearn for improvements in the back catalog. Listening to the set of course is far more important than nitpicking about the what was left off it or the storage dilemma we all have to deal with due to the packaging. Though I don't like some of the songs on *Tracks*, they all *sound* great. Hats off to the audio boys, and here's hoping Bruce continues to follow Neil Young's lead in putting out the best-sounding recordings possible.

Jon Mendez
New York, NY

Christmas came early—November 10, in fact—and this longtime Springsteen fan has been very pleasantly surprised by *Tracks*. While the set list is thrilling and compelling for us Springsteen "scholars," it might be just a little too esoteric for most of the mainstream audience. I am hoping, though, people will buy it at first for the "name" but then read the lyrics and realize the genius that has propelled him into the Hall of Fame on the first ballot.

Of my favorite songs on the box, coming in at number one is "Back in Your Arms." Bruce is well-known for his hard, driving rock songs, but we female fans know he's a romantic at heart, and this is one of those songs where he gets that emotion right. The recent album *The Ghost of Tom Joad* was a big directional change for Springsteen, and I didn't know how I felt about the "new" Bruce. However, this song has renewed my belief in his present and future work and my place as a continued fan. It is distinctly a Springsteen song, and what a great one it is!

Christine Wiemer
via e-mail

Yesterday at noon, a child of nearly 42 walked through the streets of the Belgian town he works in with the most valuable early Christmas present in his hands. A day later, and all 66 songs on *Tracks* have been listened to at least once. The prevailing feeling is of a time machine: each group of songs brings me back to the period in which they were written and recorded. Especially for the period from 1987 on. Much to my shame I must admit that Bruce Springsteen remained largely unknown to me before 1985.

The first impression I have is that—as opposed to several songs on *Human Touch*—not one of the 66 songs gave me the feeling they were not worth being on a record. The songs breathe the atmosphere of the records they were left off of, with maybe the exception of the songs recorded in '79-'80.... Disc two is of a quality I really cannot find words for. A fantastic record, with one highlight after the other: "Restless Nights," the intro to "Dollhouse," "Take 'Em as They Come," the fantastic "I Wanna Be With You," "Mary Lou." This is the Springsteen country I want to stay in for the rest of my life.

The autumn sun is shining for the first time in

TRACKS the readers respond

several weeks, I'm dancing to "Stolen Car" with my little daughter of four in my arms. I experience a feeling of intense quiet and happiness, and I owe it all to the music of one man who has been with me since the day of my first concert, in Rotterdam, June 13, 1985. Since that day these questions have been haunting me: "Where was I all those years before that day? How is it possible that the music of this man remained unnoticed to me?" I still reproach myself for this. I'll have to live with it.

Gerry Vos
Riemst, Belgium

Again, Bruce has failed to make a great idea come true 100%. Don't get me wrong, I'm happy for the new songs. But those who have not heard songs like "The Promise," "The Way," and "None But the Brave" should get that opportunity.

Anders Wester
Haninge, Sweden

I just read the *USA Today* article where Charles Cross described "Happy" as perhaps the strongest song of the collection, and I think I agree. As I listened for the first time, I was absolutely overcome with emotion during that song, and it occurred to me that this was a song where he absolutely lets his own feelings come through. Sure, we know how personal *Tunnel of Love* and "Better Days" are regarding what was going on in Bruce's life, but "Happy" just seems to have the whole of his emotions in it. And I realized I was happy along with him and, more importantly, *for* him. It dawned on me that we have grown to know so much about this man, whom so many of us haven't met, through his music that it just makes sense: we happen to care about what happens to him. And not like you care about what happens to your favorite singer off in California, but how you care about a good friend that you've known for a long time. And so as we find out about what seemed to be an intense period of dark emotion, loneliness, and soul searching through the *Nebraska* period to the troubles and perhaps naïveté of married life during the *Tunnel of Love* period to finally finding out what you can achieve in true love, with all its inevitable peaks and valleys, we are happy that our friend has gained this sense of completeness in this area of his life. And as with all our good friends, we cry our tears of joy together.

This past Saturday I was sharing "Shut Out the Light" with my girlfriend, and I was explaining the woefulness you can feel as Bruce comes into the chorus and how absolutely haunting his background vocals are, and I suddenly broke down and just cried. I had known about this song for over ten years but had never heard it. I knew that it had affected me, but this particular night was something else. I could just feel the spirit of the man in the song sort of rush through me as Bruce sang those lines and really rattle my soul around. It was very powerful, and I still have to fight back tears when I listen to it. Who else could thread that emotional needle with a 15 year old song?

Curt Steiner
Moscow, ID

Putting the box in perspective is difficult, because like many, I have heard much unreleased

material. It is unfair to rank certain songs against takes we shouldn't have already heard, or to compare what songs were chosen as opposed to what was left off. Those songs/takes were never meant for us to know about. I can only imagine how this set must sound to "fresh" ears. On first listen, the material that was new to me paled in comparison to more familiar lost "classics" ("Frankie," "Zero," "Loose Ends," etc.). Listening to material I already knew made the unbooted material seem less "classic." However, as time passes I find the reverse has occurred—I am in fact more drawn to the stuff I haven't already heard a million times (again, the fault of those of us who have "peeked" at our Christmas gift). "Wages of Sin," "Happy," "A Good Man is Hard to Find," "When You Need Me," all stand up well alongside Bruce's best. With repeated listenings, I must say that this box is a success. Yes, there are a few missteps (the verses of "Trouble in Paradise" make me cringe), but the overall product is a testament to the man's prolific creativity. Most artists would be lucky to be able to compile four CDs of classic material, much less four CDs of never-before-released material that already sounds classic.

Kevin Compton
Ashland, KY

Okay, am I being a greedy jerk when I say that *Tracks* is not enough? Probably, but I can't help it. I looked through the *Backstreets: The Man and His Music* book, and between that, and the few bootlegs that we get our hands on here in Greensboro, NC, there could easily be another box set, or at least two more CDs.

Mark McKinney
Greensboro, NC

Back in 1986 I bought my first and last bootleg album. There was one song on it that just blew me away—"Seaside Bar Song"—but the sound was so terrible I never bothered with bootlegs again. Twelve years later I had forgotten all about that song and didn't even recognize the title, but I did recognize the starting riff. As soon as I heard that riff I started running over the lyrics looking for "get your wheels and roll roll," the only line I could remember from the song, and there it was. It was almost like I was discovering Bruce all over again.

A personal favorite of mine would have to be "Born in the U.S.A." I had originally skipped past this song on the first listen, because it's been played to death and I saw Bruce do the acoustic version on the *Tom Joad* tour. Then I listened to it. Again, it was like discovering Bruce all over again. That's the way the song should have stayed; that's how "Born in the U.S.A." was meant to be heard. It quickly became my very favorite from the set.

As great as these songs are, I have to honestly say, with the exception of maybe a couple, that these songs would have been out of place on any of his official releases. I think Bruce's albums were very tight, concise packages, and any more or less might have had a different effect on the album as a whole. I'm glad he released this box set—it's going to be keeping me busy right through the winter.

Kevin Jeffers
Ontario, Canada
- more on next page -

TRACKS the critics respond

mark albums such as *Born to Run* and *Born in the U.S.A.*...

At 49, Springsteen has long passed the point where he can sell out football stadiums or sell 20 million copies of an album—as he did with *Born in the U.S.A.* If you're under 20, Springsteen's brand of rock must seem as ancient as a hand-cranked car engine.

But while *Tracks* doesn't make predictions about the future, the glimpse into the past serves as a potent reminder: Never rule out a guy whose rejects sound like masterpieces.

David Browne
Entertainment Weekly

...*Tracks* wants you to believe that for every first-rate track Springsteen released, another was canned. But the box doesn't convince you that he and his handlers made many mistakes. "Car Wash," a slab of rote Jersey-shore rock in which he sings in the voice of a disgruntled worker ("Mister, I hate my boss"), wasn't good enough for *Born in the U.S.A.* The same for the numerous, repetitive organ grinders Springsteen and the E Streeters cranked out in the late '70s and early '80s and unnecessarily resurrected here.

Frustratingly, little space is given to pre-1977 recordings, like those on last year's semi-legal bootleg *Unearthed*. The fourth disc, mostly leftovers from 1990 to '92, is pretty much a wash.... The sullen, searching tone of the lyrics is revealing, but the music, played by studio musicians with metronomic sterility, is either sodden, forced, or just repetitive.... *Tracks* could have easily been two extremely compact discs. And not to be ultra-nitpicky, but couldn't someone have thought up a more creative title—and added cut-by-cut annotation?

That said, and for all *Tracks*' padding, it is disarming to hear rock delivered with such unbridled earnestness and positive energy, gleefully drunk on its own power to elevate musicians and audiences alike. By comparison, what passes for mainstream rock now—Counting Crows and their offspring—sounds narcissistic, scrawny, emotionally guarded. Springsteen himself may never recapture the *joie de rock* he once had, but *Tracks* makes you wonder if any of us ever will.

Stuart Bailie
NME

...So let's put this into perspective. Many songs were left off the records because they weren't as good as their peers. ...Bruce, with a typical motoring metaphor, calls this collection an "alternate route." Sure, there's spectacular scenery on the B roads. But you may also lose the trail out there. Or worse, get stuck up to your axles in sludge.

Jon Pareles
The New York Times

Bruce Springsteen sounds like one of his lesser imitators on *Tracks*, a collection of leftovers from 25 years of recording. The mannerisms are all in place: the husky voice that can be enthusiastic or haggard, the robust band that moves from Chuck Berry rockers to folk-rock anthems, the progression from youthful kicks to disillusionment to sympathy for working stiffs, veterans and disillusioned lovers. Yet most of the songs are clunkers, low on melody and full of labored metaphors and painfully earnest clichés. With barely one CD's worth of new songs worth saving, *Tracks* belatedly reveals what a superb self-editor Mr. Springsteen has been until now.

- more on next page -

TRACKS the critics respond

Tom Moon
Philadelphia Inquirer

...[*Tracks*] makes plain something that the individual albums, particularly the later ones, obscure. For a long time, Springsteen and the E Street Band defined rock and roll with a swaggering stomp that could purr like a well-tuned engine or groan like a drunk facing the light of morning. That sound is "classic rock" in the best sense—music that weaves in all that came before it: traces of the Bo Diddley beat and the Chuck Berry bounce, Van Morrison's late-night blues and the earnest, lonesome sorrow of Hank Williams....

The most unexpected surprise of *Tracks* is its final disc, which gathers outtakes from *Human Touch* through the period after Springsteen's most recent recording, 1995's dour, acoustic project, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*. If the material on the first three discs doesn't demand a complete re-evaluation of this artist's career, these final selections definitely do: Those who consider Springsteen to be a "heritage" artist—a contented veteran who undertakes a new project only when commissioned, as he did with the downcast "Streets of Philadelphia"—will be surprised at the vibrancy of the throttling "Leavin' Train" and "Seven Angels," the bittersweet soul-singer understatement of "Trouble in Paradise," the taut bar-band reggae of "Part Man, Part Monkey."

These songs and others suggest something remarkable about Springsteen: After all these years, he's still on the search. His characters may be extolling happiness rather than charging impulsively down a boundless "Thunder Road," but they're still nagged by the big questions, still waiting for that determining moment, still wanting to know if love is real.

Eric Alterman
Salon

For intelligent rock fans, the first and last word this year is "Bruce." ... Probably no other rock musician could dare to present an entirely alternative career in one shot without destroying the one he first created.... Like the Dylan bootlegs, the release of *Tracks* gives musicologists plenty to worry about. What if Bruce had released the stark, acoustic version of "Born in the U.S.A." on *Nebraska* instead of waiting and releasing the rebel-rousing version that so confused Reaganite America? What if the uncertain gender relationship in "Blood Brothers" had confused Springsteen's hardcore heterosexual audience before he released "Streets of Philadelphia"? And where the hell are "The Fever" and "The Promise," for God's sake? Why is it that after the release of a four-CD box set of historic material, rock's greatest performer continues to remain its greatest tease?

Gary Graff
Wall of Sound

Tracks certainly goes beyond the tip of the iceberg, but it also misses its share of gems in favor of lesser pieces, which makes it a fascinating and in places frustrating exercise that is nonetheless a worthy addendum to Springsteen's body of work....

There are, of course, many ways to approach *Tracks*. Not everyone can recite Springsteen's recording history like liturgy, which means the level of revelation provided by this anthology varies based on your level of obsession. It's easy for ardent collectors to forget that most of the world—even fellow Springsteen followers—haven't heard a great deal of this material and will likely be blown away by "Bishop Danced," "Thundercrack," "Frankie," "Roulette," the acoustic "Born in the U.S.A.," or the

I've listened to *Tracks* all the way through twice tonight, and for the most part, I love it (flaws from a picky-ass longtime Bruce fan notwithstanding). It's so good to hear Springsteen in this context: at the peak of his powers, and recorded right.

Glen Boyd
Seattle, WA

My first listening of Bruce Springsteen's *Tracks* left me with mixed feelings. While I thought the set gave the listener a good perspective on Springsteen's work, a number of the songs were disappointing to me. Upon further listenings, I now see it as one of the finest releases in his catalog.

The most surprising disc in the set is Disc four. Like many Boss fans, I was extremely disappointed with *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town*. While *Tom Joad* was better, I still found it lacking the emotional resonance that characterizes the best of Springsteen's work. My preconception of *Tracks* was that the fourth disc would be the weakest. What a surprise. I am still stunned at the beauty of the some songs on it. In particular, "Trouble in Paradise" really stands out to me. It is one of Springsteen's finest songs ever, complete with a vocal performance that blows away anything he has done since the *Tunnel of Love* album (with the possible exception of "Back in Your Arms"). It rates as one of the finest in Springsteen's canon.

The weakest songs on the set are from the *Born in the U.S.A.* era. It is well known that Springsteen and the E Street Band recorded a number of songs for the *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions. It is also becoming clear why so many of them have never been released: because they simply aren't that good. They range from the boring ("Cynthia") to the repetitive and predictable ("This Hard Land," Bruce's most overrated song). I do like the acoustic version of "Born in the U.S.A." Springsteen sounds like an angry man in this one, a very haunting version of one of my favorite Springsteen songs.

Aaron Robertson
Bothell, WA

Tracks may be most revealing as a study of how Springsteen writes songs. I can't count how many songs on the set include lyrics that show up on later Bruce tunes, or a riff that would later be recycled. "Living On the Edge of the World" would ultimately morph into "Open All Night," for example. And putting "Mary Lou" and its close cousin "Be True" on the same disc may annoy some, but is likely to be educational to most regular fans (i.e. those who have a social life). Elsewhere, there are lyrical snatches that eventually find their way into many familiar songs, including "My Father's House," "My Beautiful Reward," "Janey Don't You Lose Heart" and others.

There are some outstanding songs in this collection.... on many of these, there is more attention to melody and harmony, and a more experimental quality than things that showed up on official albums. It's almost as if he were afraid to show he could write a killer pop tune on his albums. Here, there's at least a dozen.

Special kudos for the outstanding job Ed Thacker did on mixing some of these songs. Really noticeable on the *Darkness*-era songs, bringing them out of the primordial mush.

TRACKS the readers respond

To completists who are upset that all their favorites didn't surface this time, I suggest listening to this record a few times. You'll find that unlike the multi-volume bootleg *Lost Masters* series, these discs work as records. The reason you'll play them over and over is because there was some thought put into their structure. Besides, Springsteen is smart enough to keep these fans hungry for more. What's the fun if you already have everything?

John Rickenbach
via e-mail

This is what I wanted to be released, from the first time I heard Bruce in 1984. Now I have just bought a copy of *Tracks*, and something is missing. Don't misunderstand me, I still love Bruce and his music; I don't know what it is, but there is something missing in this box. First of all, I miss "The Promise," "The Fever," "From Small Things," "Cindy," the rockabilly "You Can Look" and "Child Bride." Why did Bruce include the B-sides when he could have put more songs on from *Darkness* and *Nebraska* instead? But "Brothers Under the Bridges ('83)" is probably the best song I've ever heard with the E Street Band. I love it! "Wages of Sin" is also very beautiful, and "A Good Man is Hard to Find (Pittsburgh)" is the finest ballad.

Anders Persson
Karlstad, Sweden

I was stunned by the fantastic sound quality of this set. Clear and mixed perfectly. I am also amazed at the depth and quality of the material. Most of these songs are *not* throwaways. To my ears there are many should-be hits on this box. I think "Seven Angels" should be released immediately as a single, and I still think the highly anticipated "Back in Your Arms" could/should be Bruce's first number one hit.

This is not so much an outtakes box as a companion piece to his other albums. Eager Boss fans are mixing their own "what-might-have-been" tapes. Would *Human Touch* have been better with "Seven Angels" instead of "Real Man"? Would *Born in the U.S.A.* have been stronger or weaker with "Rockaway" instead of "I'm Goin' Down"?

My only beef is that *Tracks* should have been 66 unreleased songs with a B-sides and rarities collection released later. As it is, I can't hit my "forward" button fast enough when I get to "Part Man, Part Monkey"—because I'd rather listen to "Goin' Cali" any time!

Mike Walk
San Antonio, TX

I have subscribed to *Backstreets* for a long time, and I am in a state of shock. After listening to the entire *Tracks* collection, I am absolutely blown away! I cannot believe the incredible precious gems that have been out there for all this time that I had not heard. Of course, I'd heard the random crappy boot of some here and there, but this is such an exquisite look into the mind of this era's most talented and prolific artist, that even as a longtime fan I found new facets to his music. Thanks to Bruce for allowing us to share in his world. I know mine is now a lot brighter.

Jason Berkley
Farmington Hills, MI

TRACKS the readers respond

Having seen Bruce live dozens of times dating back to the *River* tour, I must say I haven't been this pumped in years. I'm diving into the songs I've never heard of and I'm surprised at how many there are! And I'm revisiting some tunes I've kind of forgotten about or mistakenly discounted in the past—"Stand on It" comes to mind.

Of course, I wish some songs had made the cut, but hey, we need something to look forward to! Overall, I give the set an A. I like the fact that Bruce was trying to use the songs on the box as an extension of each of his albums. I think he succeeds in doing that.

While I would love to see some of my new favorites like "Dollhouse" performed by the E Street Band, I also wouldn't mind if this was a fond farewell to that whole period. I hope Bruce begins to release more work at a more rapid pace, even if that means he tours less frequently. I don't think I'll ever see Bruce and the boys be as "on" as they were when I was 16 back in 1980. God, I'm sure I'll never be as on again!

Chris Tracey
Audubon, NJ

Throughout Bruce's entire catalog, many of his songs pack quite a powerful emotional punch and are very meaningful to me. However, no Bruce tune had ever made me cry. That is, until I heard the studio version of "The Wish" on *Tracks*. Like Bruce, I love my mother very much too.

Stephen Weatherhead
Toronto, Canada

I've waited a long time for something like *Tracks*, so I bought the set on the very first day and listened to the songs again and again. I'm not exactly disappointed, but I'm not really enthusiastic either. Some fans will argue again that Bruce owes us nothing, but the fact is that much of the stuff on this set is only average at best, and some stuff is real bad. I'd like to know why Bruce left out classics like "The Promise," "Preacher's Daughter," "Sugarland" or "The Way," while including all those released B-sides, unnecessary songs like "Mary Lou," or even shit like "Living on the Edge of the World." It's the same problem as in 1986, when the *Live* box was released with all its faults.

What's good with *Tracks*? At first, the package is really beautiful. And of course, the inclusions of "Frankie," "Loose Ends" and "Back in Your Arms." Both versions of "Brothers Under the Bridges" are magnificent. The 1989-92 songs on disc four are very listenable. The *Tunnel of Love* outtakes on disc three are very good. And finally we have great sounding versions of "Take 'Em as They Come" and "My Love Will Not Let You Down." I guess that *Tracks* is not a failure, but it's clearly not the revelation that we dreamed of.

Michael Meineke
Bodenwerder, Germany

Here is how I would improve *Tracks*: replace "Bishop Danced" with "If I Was the Priest," replace "Rendezvous" with "The Promise," add "The Way" to disc one; add "Held Up Without a Gun" to disc two, replace "Mary Lou" with "Cindy"; add "The Big Payback" to disc three, replace "This Hard Land" with "Sugarland"; add "30 Days Out" to disc four.

This solves the problems of the inclusion of some live songs and the exclusion of some B-sides and other great songs.

Mark Petrucci
White Plains, NY

Tracks offers a much larger picture of Springsteen's career and the work his fans have come to know. Will we ever be able to listen to *The Wild, the Innocent and the E Street Shuffle* again without thinking of "Seaside Bar Song" or "Zero and Blind Terry"? The more dour songs on *Born in the U.S.A.* now have to exist side-by-side with "Lion's Den" and "This Hard Land," just as the beaten characters on *Darkness* must live next to those in "Don't Look Back." "The Wish" makes *Tunnel of Love* more than an examination of just men and women, but of family. Going back and listening to the old albums again is almost as much fun as hearing the "new" songs.

Fans can argue back and forth about what should have been included (and there are many songs that remain unreleased which should be here—just the fact that Springsteen originally planned a six-disc, 100-song set shows that part of him thinks so too), but what really matters now is that *Tracks* is a more-than-worthy addition to the Bruce Springsteen catalog. Waiting for a new record is frustrating—especially when he keeps recording and putting great stuff into the vaults. But *Tracks* will give us plenty of trips down Thunder Road, Flamingo Lane, and all the places we really want to go while we anticipate the next chapter.

Sam Favate, Jr.
Bayonne, NJ

I'd gladly pay another \$49.95 just to hear "Happy" for the first time again.

Mike Novak
San Clemente, CA



TRACKS the critics respond

sweetly autobiographical "The Wish," which have made their way onto many a bootleg. And the fact is that there's plenty of exceptional music spread across *Tracks*; even at his most pedestrian, Springsteen evokes a depth of feeling and insight into the human condition that's well beyond most performers' very best work...

From the hardcore collector's standpoint, a disturbing number of key selections are absent.... To exclude those in favor of previously available songs—or a handful of the set's weaker or redundant rarities—prevents *Tracks* from being a truly career-defining work.

But as you finger your credit card, the only important question is whether *Tracks* is worth buying. And it is, absolutely. Precious few artists can reach into their vaults and pull out this much high-quality material. And for what it doesn't have, there's always those bootlegs, or, preferably, a *More Tracks* somewhere down the line.

Jim Fusilli
Wall Street Journal

...*Tracks* suggests that [after the *Born in the U.S.A.* period] Mr. Springsteen chose substance over stardom. The material on *Tracks* that he recorded for *Tunnel of Love*, the 1987 solo effort that documented his divorce, and for *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town*, which were released simultaneously in 1992, is at times superb: There is a stretch from the end of the third disc to midway through the fourth that's as strong a work of this kind as I've heard this year.

Tracks adds to Mr. Springsteen's legacy as the best of America's post-Dylan singer-songwriters. Much more than a collection of miscellaneous and unconnected recordings, it shows an artist who's looked inward to find a superior means of expression.

Brian Alcorn
SF Weekly

...*Tracks*' overall impression is hardly any impression at all. It neither adds to nor diminishes Springsteen's status. It merely hints at a vast reservoir of OK-not-great material that's the natural byproduct of a restless, hard-working artist. Most everything here is as good as Springsteen's second-tier songs like "Darlington County" or "I'm a Rocker," but there's no undiscovered "Thunder Road" or "Atlantic City" to be found. Granted, the homoerotic subtext of songs like "Zero and Blind Terry," "Frankie," "My Lover Man," and "Brothers Under the Bridges" could make a nice *Atlantic Monthly* piece. Beyond that, the only other insight *Tracks* offers that could be called revelatory is how astute Springsteen has been at culling his best cuts from an enormous amount of so-so material. *Tracks* has a sloppiness to it that Springsteen wouldn't abide on his studio records.

David Hinckley
New York Daily News

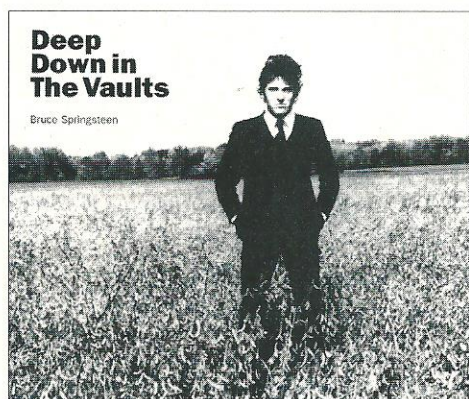
...*Tracks*, more than any other Bruce release—even the 1986 *Live* set—shows what a wide prairie he has roamed. And how well.

You can argue specific tracks here. Why leave out "If I Was the Priest," "The Promise," "The Fever," "From Small Things," or any taste of the electric *Nebraska*, when "Wages of Sin," "Take 'Em As They Come," and "The Honeymooners" are by Bruce's standards nothing special?

But after you listen to the whole thing, you can only marvel at how strong a lineup can be fielded from Springsteen's B-team.

THE OTHER BOX the bootleggers respond

With Columbia's release of *Tracks* comes an inevitable side-effect: the bootleggers' response. One of the first and loudest return shots fired comes from E. St. Records, with a multi-disc retrospective of their own. Despite the recent wealth of previously unheard Springsteen material, between *The Lost Masters* and *Tracks*, E. St.'s ***Deep Down in the Vaults*** manages to uncover one surprise after another. **Rich Kortz** digs in.



Initial reviews of *Deep Down in the Vaults* have criticized it for its scattershot lineup, but for me the eclectic mix of goodies is exactly what makes it so fun to listen to. And there is an underlying logic here. The set moves sequentially through Bruce's career from his Freehold beginnings to *Tom Joad* soundboard recordings. Noticably absent, however, is anything representative from the *Born in the U.S.A.* period. One can only assume there simply isn't much uncirculated material in the boot vaults from those years in this kind of quality (E. St.'s *Fistfull of Dollars* makes for a nice companion release, as it opens the vault on the *Nebraska*-era demos). While the simultaneous release of *Tracks* is surely stealing some of the thunder from *Deep Down in the Vaults*, I'm willing to wager that the surprise factor for the listener will be the same for this three-disc wonder.

disc one/ young and innocent

THAT'S WHAT YOU GET / BABY I

The famous first recordings by the Castiles, as historic in their own way as the Beatles' Liverpool recordings, have been nicely cleaned up by E. St. The pops, skips and clicks present on previously bootlegged versions are gone. Still, the sound is not perfect. These were, after all, acetates recorded by a bunch of kids "hustlin' for the record machine" in a suburban New Jersey strip mall. Amazingly, Bruce's signature style is present right from the very beginning. Listen carefully to "That's What You Get" and you'll hear the wellspring from which brooding songs like "Downbound Train" arose. Bruce even uses a line ("I dropped to my knees and cried") that he'd reprise more than 15 years later.

THE WIND AND THE RAIN

This is now easily the best sounding Steel Mill tape in circulation. Let's hope the entire show is on the roster

for E. St.'s "Historic Performance" series. A 20-minute barrage of guitar and drums cuts across time and space to put Steel Mill right in your living room.

BALLAD OF JESSE JAMES

A perfect example of why this set is a joy to behold. Here we get a previously uncirculated and unknown studio recording from the Bruce Springsteen Band in beautiful quality. Material from this period has always been scarce, and only one other studio effort ("Look Towards the Land") was known. This is from that same session and is another of the funky-up western-themed ballads that Bruce was cranking out during this period. Give E. St. credit for beginning their box set with performances that pre-date the Hammond demos.

SAINT IN THE CITY

This is familiar stuff until the fade-out, when we hear a short rap that adds nicely to the "street" feel of the song. Very similar to what Springsteen would do for Lou Reed's "Street Hassle" and the spoken rap on the "Badlands" outtake from *The Lost Masters*. Not mind-blowing, but it's neat to hear this could-have-been version.

YOU MEAN SO MUCH TO ME

My candidate for the most amazing track on the first disc. Although previously circulated, the sound quality here has to be heard to be believed, and the performance is absolutely killer. The ghost of The Band hovers over this rendition, and hearing it might make you think that Bruce's creative peak was his 1973 acoustic radio tour.

THE FEVER

The common, circulating outtake, but here in absolutely perfect sound. The definitive boot release of this classic that's strangely missing from the official box.

PHANTOMS

The music is familiar to anyone who's heard "Zero and Blind Terry," but lyrically and thematically, "Phantoms" is completely different. This is a real production, complete with a haunting female backing vocal and some great sing-along stuff from the rest of the band. Another track that's sure to produce that "holy shit" reaction.

ROSALITA / THUNDERCRACK / BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

Disc one closes out with three live, crystal-clear soundboard performances. But these aren't typical bootleg fare. The performance of "Rosalita" is supposedly the first ever and is quite different from the live rave-up we're accustomed to, with a great Tex-

Mex feel. "Thundercrack" is a definitive live version, and "Blinded By the Light" is seriously funky, with some hilarious vocals from Bruce and a killer intro.

disc two/i wanna be wild

JUNGLELAND

Disc two starts off with more incredible, previously uncirculated material. This early version of "Jungleland" is quite different lyrically from the *Born to Run* version, and the emphasis on strings gives the song a striking, classical spin. Bruce's vocals sound casual (at one point he almost begins to laugh), tipping us off that this probably isn't a serious attempt at a master, but more of a working tape. There's no sax solo from Clarence here—an intricate string arrangement fills the space—and Bruce's extended, wordless howl is missing from the end, which gives the intrepid a chance at some karaoke.

BACKSTREETS

Another standout track in the set: an uncirculated, alternate take of one of Bruce's most affecting songs. In contrast to the tossed-off vocal on "Jungleland," Bruce attacks this tune with real vigor, giving the song a rougher, more immediate presence than the *BTR* version. There's some nice orchestration and some drastically different lyrics too, including one verse that mentions a "heartbreak hotel." Some great Dylanesque organ work from Danny too. My pick for the standout track on disc two.

SANDY / RAISE YOUR HAND / YOU CAN'T SIT DOWN

These three tracks from a 1976 Waterbury, CT, show are simply tremendous. The sound here is equal to the *Live 1975-85* release. Where in the heck are these things coming from? "Sandy" is perhaps the definitive live recording of this song. "Raise Your Hand" kicks off with a priceless bit where Bruce has the audience spell out *E Street*. The raucous "You Can't Sit Down" just kicks ass—and dig those mighty Miami Horns! Please write your Congressman and insist the entire show be released.

CRAZY ROCKER / I WANNA BE WILD

Despite being newly unearthed outtakes, these two *Darkness* leftovers are the first flaws in the overall quality of this set. "Crazy Rocker" is exactly that. This Fogerty-inspired number does have a spooky, rhythmic appeal, but the vocals are so drowned in echo that you can't make them out. If this song had been worked up more, it might have fit nicely into the live "Mona" / "Not Fade Away" buildup to "She's The One." "I Wanna Be Wild" is more disappointing, mainly because the vocals are practically inaudible. The music track however, is pristine—and familiar to anyone who's heard the outtake "Don't Say No."

THE PROMISE

Just when your faith in this release might start to flag, along comes "The Promise." This is an entirely different studio recording than the circulating outtake. While the vocals on that known version are somewhat distant, here they are vivid and upfront. The song has a stark, mesmerizing groove, like many of the great *Darkness* outtakes. Amazing. And check out the drum sound near the end, when everything else drops out.

WHAT'S THE MATTER LITTLE DARLING / GET THAT FEELING

More newly uncovered outtakes, these two are pretty decent. The U.S. Bondsish "What's The Matter Little Darling" suffers only from a slightly low vocal mix, but overall the track is a rollicking gem, a not-so-distant cousin of "Sherry Darling." "Get That Feeling" has circulated before, but this is an entirely different, probably earlier recording. Raw and lush at the same time, this tune, and "The Promise," are very welcome new additions to the ever-expanding archive of *Darkness* outtakes.

PROVE IT ALL NIGHT

Like "The Fever" on disc one, another definitive release of a track that's been around awhile. Familiar, yes, but it never sounded so good. This is a professionally mixed version from Berkeley '78 that was designated as a single release but then cancelled and ultimately released only to radio. Should've been on the *Live* box.

TAKE 'EM AS THEY COME

Irrelevant, now that we've got a definitive version on the Columbia box

HUNGRY HEART

A real hoot. The Danish band Malurt covers this *River* tune, with special guest (guess who). It's a riot listening to Bruce trying to bring some dignity to the cheesy arrangement—and damned if he doesn't. This cut has been around before (most notably on the old vinyl classic *By the River*) but once again has never sounded better.

disc three/trouble in paradise

TROUBLE RIVER

Suprisingly, given the wealth of great material found on discs one and two, disc three might be the strongest yet in terms of consistency. It kicks off with a best-ever sounding version of this tune discarded from *Human Touch*. This snarling CCR-style rocker is certainly as good as many tracks that did make the album—and as good as many of the numerous outtakes that made it to *Tracks* [though it will soon see official released as a bonus track]. Stylistically, "Trouble River" might be the missing link that bridges *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town*, seamlessly incorporating the many disparate elements found on both.

LIVING PROOF

Sure, I watched *Saturday Night Live* that night Bruce was on, and yeah, I thought he rocked the house, but I don't remember him sounding *this* good! A little time and an incredible source tape have stripped away the tacky *SNL* association and revealed this track for what it is: the most amazing live recording of Bruce with his post-E Street band. If the whole tour had sounded this good, it would have rivaled 1978.

BOOK OF DREAMS

Another revelation. This track may have been lost in the shuffle back in 1992, being one of the quieter tunes on *Lucky Town*. Here, in its so-called "Plugged" arrangement, it becomes a gorgeous love song worthy of *The River*, as touching as "I Wanna Marry You." The most succesful tune from this MTV endeavor was left on the cutting room floor.

STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA / MISSING

These are both alternate mixes recorded for film and video projects. "Streets" is quite different. Bruce actually recorded his vocal with a clip-on mic while walking the very streets he sings about. The track has some added instrumental touches, and a bit more hip-hop echo. That, along with all the sounds of traffic, dogs, kids, etc., makes for a very heady mix. Sounds great with headphones. "Missing" is not as much of a change, but even a slightly different version of this haunting and gripping track is still nice to have.

BLOOD BROTHERS / THIS HARD LAND / SECRET GARDEN

These are all from the E Street Band reunion sessions for *Greatest Hits*, and while the songs are familiar, these particular versions are not. All three sound like early attempts, but they certainly are not sloppy or indecisive. "Blood Brothers" is nice, and subtly different from the *GH* version. "This Hard Land," in this rougher incarnation, actually captures a bit more of the folksy appeal of the never-surpassed '80s version. Do we need another version of "Secret Garden"? Probably not—but this is apparently the first take, a real testament to the instinctive talents of this band.

WAITING ON THE END OF THE WORLD

Another track from the *GH* session tape. That whole tape is a real find, and a nice companion to the material from the *Blood Brothers* video. Here we get a completely uncirculated song, and it's a nice one—reminiscent of something like "Man's Job," but with a little more bite. I don't really care if the song isn't another "Born to Run"; it's just a real treat to hear the E Street Band do what they do.

BACK IN YOUR ARMS

Pure gold: a complete rendition of this ballad we were

unmercifully teased with in the *Blood Brothers* video. This has got to be one of Bruce's finest moments. On this night, Bruce was sitting down in the campfire light with the ghost of ol' Otis Redding. Listening to this will convince any doubters that Springsteen has never lost his gifts and never will. Compare this with the strikingly different take found on *Tracks*. There, with the added instrumentation, it is lush and soulful. Here, it is raw, gripping and sublime. The standout track on disc three.

MURDER INC. / LITTLE LATIN LUPE LU

Here we get two amazing-sounding tracks from the night of the Jonathan Demme video shoot. "Murder Inc." rocks, but this is no real big surprise. I have yet to be disappointed by any version of this song. "Lupe Lu" is a nice touch of the old times, and it rocks too. In the middle of the song Bruce calls out to each member for a solo. Steve, Nils, Clarence, Patti, Danny and Roy all get their shot at the spotlight, and it's priceless stuff. Okay, it could cost you 75 bucks, but it's still priceless.

NEVER BE ENOUGH TIME

I've always felt that this song was the best thing Joe Grushecky and Bruce did together live, and here it becomes what is easily the best-sounding boot track available from Bruce's 1995 tour with the Houserockers. This sucker smokes. It's from the Pittsburgh show, and the guitar interplay here is so hot you could use it to heat up Nick's Fat City all winter long.

THE GHOST OF TOM JOAD / ADAM RAISED A CAIN

While perfect-sounding live tracks from this tour are nothing new to fans, these two recordings are from a soundboard and are nothing short of astonishing. I'm as tired of boot releases from this tour as anyone, but I'd go for one more if it contained the complete tape of this show. ➔

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE OTHER BOX by rich breton

A slew of rare tracks, some only rumored to exist previously. Complete versions of songs where only an incomplete version existed before. Old favorites in the best-ever sound quality—for that matter, just about everything contained here has excellent sound. Everything about *Deep Down in the Vaults* says I should love it to pieces. So why do I feel disappointed?

While I am suitably impressed by the material, I'm much less impressed with the product as a whole—especially considering the implied concept of this as a companion piece to *Tracks*. *Deep Down* is a haphazard mixture of live and studio tracks, and the only unifying concept behind it that I can reasonably perceive is that the material is either uncirculated or never before released in good sound quality. There's a tremendous gap in time between the *River*-era tracks that end disc two and the *Human Touch*/*Lucky Town*-era tracks that begin disc three. And some of the material is particularly weak.

Don't get me wrong, there are stretches that are great, and I find the first disc to be the strongest, but it's rare when a compilation set really works as a whole. It's like a three-disc set of mostly great-sounding leftovers that didn't fit anywhere else. Frustratingly, there are plenty of cuts that, taken individually, still make it worthwhile.

I've never heard "The Fever" sound better, and the alternate take of "The Promise" is more completely realized as a studio track than other versions that have circulated. To have the "officially mixed" 1978 live version of "Prove It All Night" as well as the precursor to "Zero And Blind Terry" called "Phantoms" makes it hard to complain. But as a unit this set doesn't bear repeated listenings. It's the opposite of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts, in which this release as a unit drags down the significance of its best material.

To me, it's a solid four-star release, but not the five-star one I was expecting. But there's no way I can not recommend this title. I may not love it to pieces as a whole, but I love pieces of it tremendously.

Why let sleeping dogs lie?

Waking the Great Dane

By Richard Breton

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real rip-offs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.



•**Winterland Night**
(Crystal Cat, 3CD)
Sound: 9
Packaging: 8
Performance: 10

This is a long overdue re-release of the famous December 15, 1978 radio broadcast from Winterland in San Francisco, California. This show has been released previously on several labels, the best of which was *Live in the Promised Land* on the legendary but now-defunct Great Dane label.

That title has been out of print for nearly four years and, as such, has been highly sought after by

collectors. In fact, Great Dane released this show twice, the second version being part of their "Master Plus" series. The Master Plus edition was a vast improvement over the original and a five-star set, but with the demise of Great Dane, this title in either of its forms has been difficult to come by. Since the show represented here is so well known and revered by many Bruce fans, let's concentrate on the pros and cons of this particular release rather than on the show itself.

Both *Live in the Promised Land* and *Winterland Night* used a copy from the radio station master tape of the show, not a tape of the broadcast itself. But there were two problems that plagued the Great Dane release. The first was tape speed—whether mastered incorrectly or taken from slightly defective source tape, *Live in the Promised Land* ran a little too slow. By using a better source tape as well as careful mastering, this problem has been completely corrected on *Winterland Night*. The sound is slightly better in general on this new release.

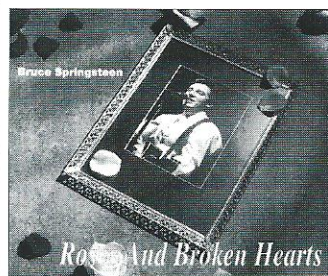
The second problem was that of the final encore song on *Live in the Promised Land*, "Quarter to Three." It was well known that the radio station, taping this show for their archives, was unprepared when Bruce and the band—after having already closed the show—came back out to play "Quarter to Three," which was never actually broadcast over the airwaves. By the time the station started taping again, they had already missed the beginning of the song. Yet on *Live in the Promised Land*, the song is not only complete but sounds like it was taken from a different source tape. It's been speculated that Great Dane substituted "Quarter to Three" from a different 1978 show altogether, rather than present the incomplete version from the Winterland source tape. The "Quarter to Three" on *Winterland Night* is the incomplete version. *Winterland Night* also includes the DJ chatter before

the show and before the encores, all from the original source tape. While not adding anything sonically, it gives one the feeling of hearing the whole broadcast as it happened.

Most everything, including the packaging, points to *Winterland Night* as being the successor to *Live in the Promised Land* as the best representation of this show. The only exception is the way the show is presented on the discs. *Live in the Promised Land* presented the opening set of the show on the first disc, the second set on the disc two, and the final portion including the encores on the third disc. Each disc was separated at more or less the logical breakpoints in the show, and as such presented the entire show admirably. The Great Dane release also edited out the DJ chatter, leaving just the show. The most glaring misstep on *Winterland Night* is that the first song of the second set is included, without a break in audience noise, at the end of the first disc.

Most may think this is a minor quibble, since the end result was to allow time for a number of bonus tracks at the end and hence a better "overall value." But the fact remains that the main reason Crystal Cat broke up the sets was probably not to add value, but to make this set a bit harder to copy to CD-R discs. The proliferation of CD-Rs has not escaped the labels' attention, and many of them, Crystal Cat included, often program their releases to exceed 74 minutes per discs just for this reason (currently, most CD-R discs can only copy approximately 74 minutes). Of course, once all the bugs are worked out of longer CD-R discs and they enter the mainstream, all the preventative measures will be moot. As such, this release will still remain somewhat flawed, for no good reason.

Still, you have to look at the entire package. Better sound, correct speed, better packaging, and bonus tracks add up to one impressive release.



•**Roses and Broken Hearts**
(Gamble, 3CD)
Sound: 7
Packaging: 7
Performance: 10

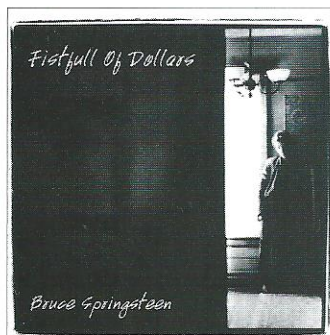
This is another re-release of an older title that has been unavailable for some time. The original release of the May 3, 1988 *Tunnel of Love* show from the Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View, CA, also called *Roses and Broken Hearts*, was on the Great Dane label. This is purported to be a re-mastered version.

In a way, all the releases of this show can be said to be mostly taken from the soundboard—as represented on the line-feed video. Unfortunately, the sound has always been rather flat and compressed. Those looking for vastly improved sound on this release will be disappointed. Instead of going back to the original source tapes, it seems Gamble Records has just taken a copy of Great Dane's *Roses and Broken Hearts* CD set and tinkered with the sound digitally in an attempt to clean it up and add some sorely missing dynamics. In reality, the end result is not really better or worse than the Great Dane release, and for the most part one can not hear any differences at all. There's only so much that can be attempted without actually making the sound worse, and thankfully Gamble Records didn't cross that line.

While the packaging for this release is fine and has several appropriate, if small, pictures used on the cover and booklet, the edge still goes to the original Great Dane version, especially for the front cover picture. Besides the packaging, the only

other difference are the two bonus tracks taken from the soundcheck that night, "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" and a fine "Crying," tacked on at the end of the third disc.

For those that don't already have Great Dane's version of this show, I can easily recommend this as a reissue of a great show that's been out of print for a while. If you already have the Great Dane release, there's nothing much here to recommend replacing that five-star set.



•Fistfull of Dollars

(E. St.)

Sound: 6-8

Packaging: 8

Performance: 7

When *The Lost Masters I: Alone in Colt's Neck* came out a couple years ago, it was described as one of the best, if not the best, of the *Lost Masters* series. Recorded in late 1981 and early 1982, that release contained what was purported to be a copy of one of the original demo tapes that would become *Nebraska*. As the lore had it, Bruce was holed up in Colt's Neck, NJ, with a four-track cassette deck when he recorded a bunch of songs, most of which ended up on that album virtually unchanged, and others that would eventually be reworked for *Born in the U.S.A.* The new book of lyrics, *Songs*, also supports this.

But if various other volumes of *The Lost Masters* taught us anything, it's that no song Bruce writes springs out fully-formed. What we have here are the sometimes fascinating but equally frustrating series of acoustic demos that preceded the *Nebraska* tape.


First, let's concentrate on the fascinating. The set starts out with a song called "Vietnam," which, although musically different, is the lyrical ancestor to both "Born in the U.S.A." and

"Shut Out the Light." A couple of takes of "Johnny 99" follow, both with alternate lyrics. The first take offers an extra "self-defense" explanation as to why the night clerk was shot.

"The Answer" is an early version of "Losin' Kind." "Love is a Dangerous Thing" is an uptempo song which contains at least one line that would make it into "Shut Out the Light." The first version of "Used Cars" found here contains a few nice harmonica breaks. There's an early version of "Atlantic City" and its precursor called "Fist Full of Dollars." One of the better songs on this disc is "Fade to Black," a slow song not unlike "Fade Away" but still unfinished.

As for the frustrating aspects of this release, "Downbound Train," "Club Soul City," some takes of "Born in the U.S.A." and the last eight or so songs are just short snippets, most clocking in at less than two minutes each. To add to this frustration, some of them seem to start mid-song, and quite a few are musically similar in some way—same chords and/or tempo. "Red River Rock" is just Bruce tentatively whistling along to guitar accompaniment. In addition, the sound is great on the first 17 songs but drops dramatically after that.

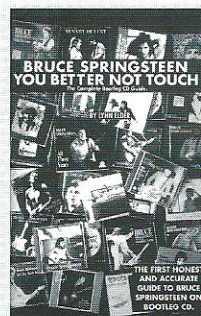
Another source of frustration is the tracking. Track two of the CD is actually two takes of "Used Cars," one near-complete and one complete. There's at least one good acoustic guitar version of "Born in the U.S.A." on this set, but finding it may be a problem because of the partial takes included on some of the tracks—in fact, one take begins on one track and is finished at the beginning of the next.

While the material is an amazing find historically, this is not a disc that will invite repeated listening. The start/stop nature of several tracks, with the most egregious offender being "Born in the U.S.A.," makes one lose interest in the songs long before a good whole take is offered. Even though this set was culled from longer source tapes, this is still a disc in desperate need of editing. For those who are partial to Bruce's solo acoustic demo excursions, this is for you. The rest may want to pass, or wait until the best parts are compiled for a different release. 

YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH

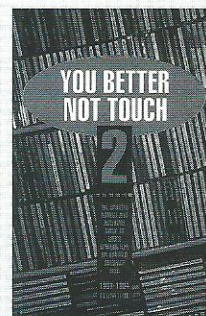
The guide to Boss bootlegs on compact disc

Backstreets reviewer Lynn Elder's series of guides to the bootleg CDs of Bruce Springsteen. With Volume 3, the *YBNT* series covers Boss boots from the first release through 1997. Thorough, honest, and well-illustrated, these guides provide ratings for sound, packaging and performance. For each title *YBNT* also offers an overall star rating; show and source information; exhaustive comments and more. Each title is pictured so you'll know what to look for—or what to avoid! With Volumes 1, 2 and 3, you'll have exhaustive advice on virtually every Boss boot to date and a resource no collector should be without.



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YBNT1 compiles reviews and ratings for the first 80+ Bruce boot CDs, including quite a few classics, released through 1991. By Lynn Elder.



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YBNT2 picks up where the first guide left off, covering approximately 150 Bruce bootleg CDs released from 1991-1994. By Lynn Elder.



YBNT3 covers bootlegs released from 1994-1997. Since the publication of *Volume Two*, some 200 new titles have been released and reviewed here. *YBNT3* also includes three appendices, and at a massive 232 pages, it's the biggest one yet by far. By Lynn Elder.

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The Fever is coming. Promise.

Three "New" Tracks on 18 Tracks

Fans up in arms about "The Fever" and "The Promise" being missing from *Tracks* won't have to wait much longer. A proposed "Sad Eyes" single with "The Fever" as a B-side has been canceled—but a planned CD taking its place should offer even more. The upcoming sampler of *Tracks* highlights will add a handful of unreleased bonus cuts to songs from the box. Not only will the currently titled *18 Tracks* give fans Springsteen's first official versions of "The Promise" and "The Fever," but also add a third track, the *Human Touch* outtake "Trouble River." The remaining 15 songs will be culled from the box set.

Springsteen had explained in interviews that he didn't have a recording of "The Promise" he was happy with, so to solve that problem, he simply recorded the song again. The version on *18 Tracks* was recorded at Springsteen's home studio on February 12, 1999. "The Fever" is the nearly 8-minute take recorded on May 16, 1973, and "Trouble River" on April 6, 1990. *18 Tracks* is slated for release in April on CD, cassette, and on vinyl as a 2LP set.

Something else fans have been waiting for is an improvement in the current state of the Springsteen back catalog on CD. Now would seem to be the perfect time to give *Darkness* and *The River* an upgrade, and indeed, a long-overdue series of remastered Springsteen CDs was finally planned for this spring. Recent word has been that the reissues had been canceled or at least indefinitely on hold, but *Ice* magazine recently reported that they have been "tentatively penciled in for June on the Columbia schedule."

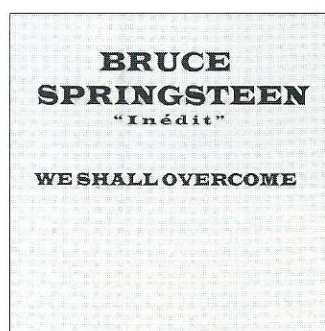
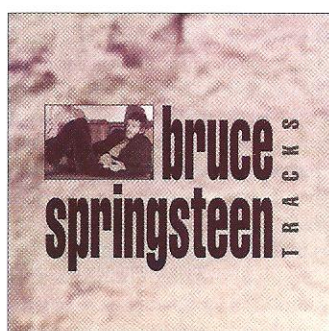
In the meantime, several CDs have been issued to promote *Tracks*. Both "Happy" and "Sad Eyes" were pressed as one-track promotional CDs in Spain. Though a "Sad Eyes" single hasn't seen commercial release, the song is also the lead-off track of

a four-song radio sampler from Sweden which adds "Janey Don't You Lose Heart," "I Wanna Be With You," and "Hearts of Stone."

A different mini-sampler was pressed in the US, with three tracks: "I Wanna Be With You," "Lion's Den," and "Part Man, Part Monkey." Not for radio, this promo was first available exclusively as a premium with the first edition of the *Songs* book. Recently, Sony offered the same US three-song disc as a freebie, available from participating stores with a coupon that could be printed off the web. For radio promotion was a 15-song sampler CD—with a different selection of songs than reported for the upcoming highlights disc.

There have even been a few variations when it comes to the box itself. For early promotional review copies, Sony pressed the set's four discs on CD-R in type-only white sleeves (pictured on pages 18-19). Sony Japan can often be counted upon to offer unique packaging, and though their edition of *Tracks* wasn't nearly as remarkable as other Japanese releases have been in the past, it is still notably different. The Japanese *Tracks* box comes with two booklets rather than one: the standard booklet is printed on thinner paper stock to accommodate the second, which uses a black and white version of the cover image and has lyrics and other text in Japanese. The box itself is in most other respects the same, though it does have a "SME Records" logo (Sony Music Entertainment) in place of the Columbia logo.

For some lucky fans in Sweden, *Tracks* was packaged with a promotional video containing eight clips, some rare or unreleased: four songs from the Phoenix '78 recording (including the original "Rosalita" clip), "The River" from *No Nukes*, the 1985 "Born to Run" video, the Berlin '95 "Hungry Heart" clip, and a live performance of "Glory Days" from the opening night of the



1992-'93 tour in Stockholm.

There has been one new CD single lately, but not what we were expecting. While *Tracks* compiled many of Springsteen's B-sides, the live flipsides still have to be tracked down individually. The live "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town" has been available on a rare UK CD5 for "Tunnel of Love" and, increasingly, on holiday compilations that made fans shell out 17 bucks for one song. Columbia recently rectified the situation by reissuing the "My Hometown"/"Santa Claus" single as a two-track CD5 in a cardboard sleeve with the same artwork as the original 45.

"My Hometown" is also included on a new benefit CD called *Sounds for the Soul*. The album goes to benefit North Jersey charities, and the theme should appeal to Bruce fans: the compilation includes Tom Waits' "Jersey Girl," John Gorka's "I'm from New Jersey," and quite a few other Garden State ditties. *Sounds for the Soul* is available in some North Jersey stores, or check out the website at <www.soundsforthesoul.com>.

"The River" is included on a recent European Sony compila-

tion—or make that two. Actually, it's the same collection sold under two different titles. The Swedish version is called *Most Wanted Love Songs*. "The River" may not be the most romantic song around, but maybe that title will move more copies than the Danish *Kruschel Rock II*. More suitably, "Shut Out the Light" is included on the soundtrack *Vietnam: Long Time Coming*.

Springsteen's version of "We Shall Overcome" was pressed as a one-track promotional CD in a cardboard sleeve, released in France only. The song was taken from Red House Records' Pete Seeger Tribute, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone*.

Shortly after the release of *Live 1975-85*, a sampler LP appeared out of Brazil called *Ao Vivo*. Now *Ao Vivo* has surfaced on compact disc, with the same track listing. This release may look questionable, but, like the LP, it seems to be an official issue from Sony Music in Brazil. One caveat: the disc has been advertised as *Ao Vivo: Live in Brazil*, but don't be fooled—the disc only contains songs taken directly from the *Live 1975-85* box.

—Christopher Phillips

CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONALS

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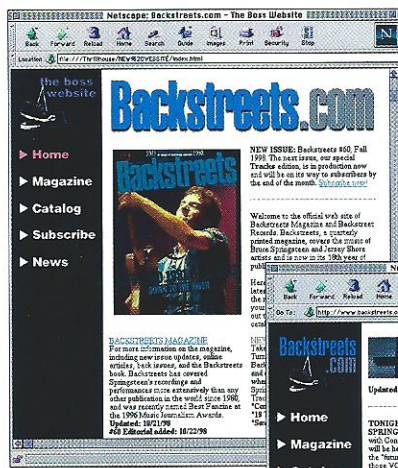
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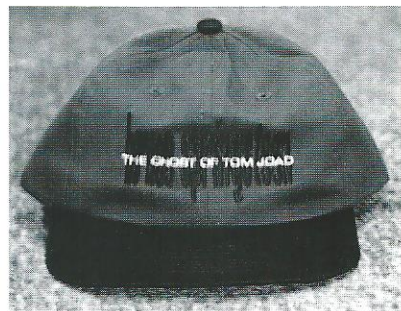
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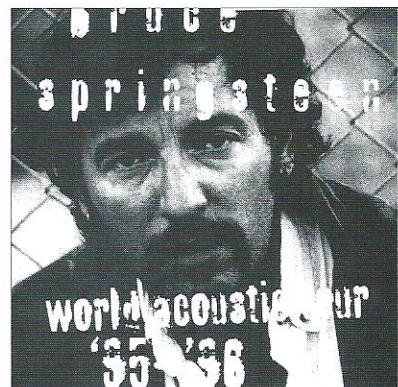
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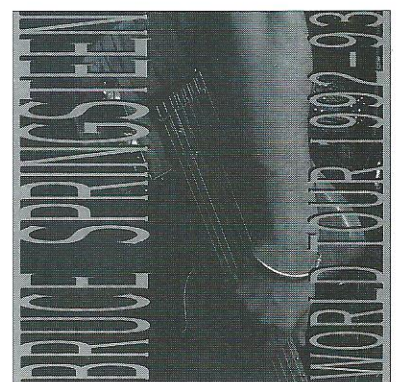


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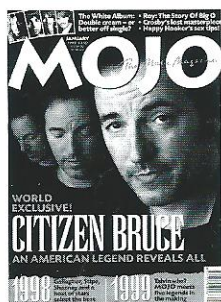
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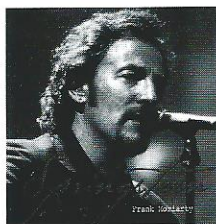
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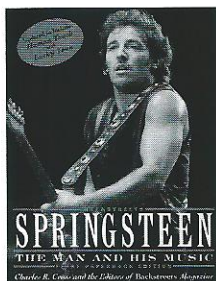
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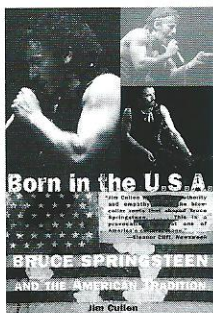
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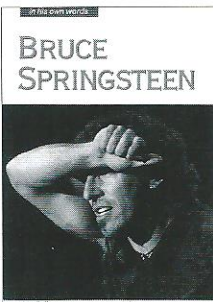
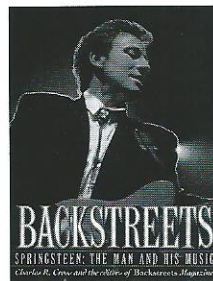
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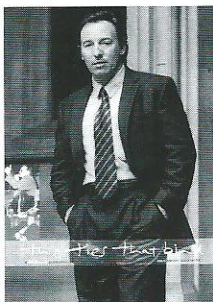


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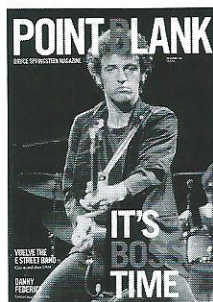
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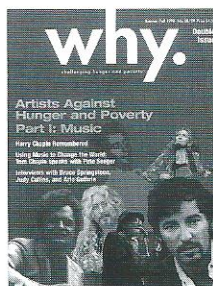
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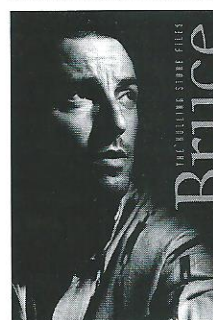
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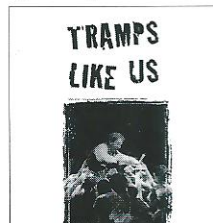
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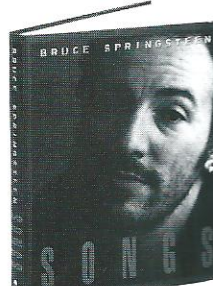
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the backstreets liner notes



BY ERIK FLANNIGAN AND CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS

Byond his insightful introductory note, Bruce Springsteen elected not to annotate the 66 songs included on *Tracks*. However, with the release of the box set, he did give an unprecedented number of interviews to publications like *Billboard* and *MOJO* which revealed fascinating background details about these songs, how he chose them, and why they were left off of the albums in the first place. Over the last 19 years that this magazine has been published, the editors of *Backstreets* have attempted to catalog Springsteen's recording and performance history from a fan's perspective, albeit at times an obsessive one. This booklet takes a comprehensive look at all 66 songs on *Tracks* by presenting some of Springsteen's own comments about the material in context with each track's researched history (correcting a few *Tracks* typos along the way) and the editors' contemporary analysis. It is in no way intended to replace the *Tracks* booklet, nor is it meant as our statement as to what kind of liner notes should have been included in *Tracks*. In the purest sense of the word it is a supplement, one which we hope will broaden our readers' understanding and interest in 66 fascinating songs recorded over 27 years. If *Tracks* itself presented "the alternate route," consider this booklet the alternate road map.

—The Editors of *Backstreets*

1

1. Mary Queen of Arkansas
2. It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City
3. Growin' Up
4. Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?

RECORDING LOCATION: CBS Studios, New York, NY
RECORDING DATE: May 3, 1972

HISTORY: Four of the 12 songs performed at Bruce's Columbia Records audition for legendary A&R man John Hammond. The session was assigned the job number 79682, and it is Hammond's voice heard giving this information at the start of the CD. "Mary Queen of Arkansas" was the first song performed that day; "Cowboys of the Sea" the last. Of the remaining eight songs which constitute the Hammond demos, only one, "The Angel," would be released on a future album. Some have wondered whether Springsteen's ongoing legal battle over early recordings prevented him from including any of the unreleased songs from this session such as "I Was the Priest"—which, legend has it, impressed Hammond the most. Springsteen recently told Mark Hagen in *MOJO* magazine, "I think the record John Hammond would have liked would have been one that the first four or five cuts from *Tracks* sound like. Maybe that exact thing, and, listening back, he may have been right." Bruce was offered a contract with Columbia the day after this audition.

BRUCE SAYS: "It was a big, big day for me.... I was 22 and came up on the bus with an acoustic guitar with no case which I'd borrowed from the drummer for the Castiles. I was embarrassed carrying it around the city. I walked into his office and had the audition and I played a couple of songs and he said, 'You've got to be on Columbia Records. But I need to see you play. And I need to hear how you sound on tape.' Me and Mike Appel walked all around the Village trying to find some place that would let somebody just get up on stage and play. We went to the Bitter End, it didn't work out. We went to another club. And finally we went to the old Gaslight on McDougal Street and the guy says, 'Yeah, we have an open night where you can come down and play for half an hour.' There were about ten people in the place and I played for about half an hour. John Hammond said, 'Gee, that was great. I want you to come to the Columbia Recording Studio and make a demo tape.' A demo I made at Bill Graham's studio in San Francisco in '69 was the only other time I'd ever been in a real recording studio. Columbia was very old-fashioned: everybody in ties and shirts; the engineer was in a white shirt and was probably 50, 55 years old, it was just him and John and Mike Appel there, and he just hits the button and gives you your serial number, and off you go. I was excited. I felt I'd written some good songs and this was my shot. I had nothing to lose and it was like the beginning of something. I knew a lot about John Hammond, the work he'd done, the people he'd discovered, his importance in music, and it was very exciting to feel you were worth his time. No matter what happened afterwards, even if it was just for this one night, you were worth his time. That meant a lot to me. He was very encouraging—simply being in that room with him at the board was one of my greatest recording experiences."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

5. Bishop Danced

RECORDING LOCATION: Max's Kansas City, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: Listed as February 19, 1973, but there is some confusion about this date. Most assign the performance to August 30, 1972, the date given by the King Biscuit Flower Hour broadcast (see below), while a bootleg release of the complete Max's set, including "Bishop Danced," dated the show as March 7, 1973. Based on the known tour chronology and on comments Bruce made during the show, the date of this performance is most likely January 31, 1973.

HISTORY: One of two live cuts on *Tracks*, "Bishop Danced" was also aired on the inaugural King Biscuit Flower Hour and reprised in the pre-show special to the 1988 *Tunnel of Love* radio broadcast from Stockholm. The same live version was also used as a publishing demo by Laurel Canyon. Performed by Bruce with Danny Federici's accordion accompaniment.

6. Santa Ana

7. Seaside Bar Song

8. Zero and Blind Terry

RECORDING LOCATION: 914 Sound Recording, Blauvelt, NY

RECORDING DATE: June 28, 1973

HISTORY: These three songs, along with "Thundercrack" and "The Fever," were cut the same day at the start of the sessions for the second album, about a week after pianist David Sancious joined the E Street Band. All five were eventually passed over for *Wild & Innocent*, but the recordings went on to be used as publishing demos. A six-song acetate (adding "Bishop Danced" and substituting a live "Thundercrack") was pressed for use by Springsteen's British publishing agency, Intersong; material from that disc was eventually bootlegged on the LP *Fire on the Fingertips* (which got all the titles wrong) and later on the CD *Forgotten Songs*. Springsteen performed all three songs on the Chicago tour. While "Seaside Bar Song" and "Santa Ana" might both be called "bar songs," "Zero and Blind Terry" was the first of Springsteen's romantic epics, paving the way for "Incident on 57th Street," "Backstreets," and "Jungleland."

BRUCE SAYS: "These really long, strange stories, these kind of funky epics—I don't know what they were!"

—*Rolling Stone* interview, 1998

"I just wrote what came out and the songs work on an abstract basis, but that's what makes them fun. 'Santa Ana' is just a series of images, but it works, there's a story being told. But later I turned away from that kind of writing because I received Dylan comparisons.... Many of the songs we played early in concert—we played 'Santa Ana' all the time. When I went on the road, I took the point of view I developed on my first record and I began to just write with the band in mind, with the



Charlie Frick Photo

idea of mixing those two things. We cut them all and at the time they didn't get on, probably because there was a limited amount of time you could put on a record, only about 36 or 40 minutes tops, and so things just didn't get on because there wasn't enough room, or you didn't think you sang that one that well, or the band didn't play that one that well, or you wanted to mess around with the writing some more. 'Zero & Blind Terry' was a big song we played live all the time and 'Santa Ana,' 'Seaside Bar Song,' 'Thundercrack' were all from that particular period.

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: "French cream won't soften those boots, baby/ French kisses will not break your heart" from "Santa Ana" would later be rephrased for use in "She's the One." "The highway is alive tonight," from "Seaside Bar Song" became one of the defining phrases in "The Ghost of Tom Joad" 22 years later.

ALTERNATE SONG TITLES: "Santa Ana" was also known as "Contessa" and "The Guns of Kid Cole." "Seaside Bar Song" was listed as "Coup Deluxe" on early set lists. "Zero & Blind Terry" was short-listed for Bruce's third album, and was even considered early on as a possible title (*The Legend of Zero & Blind Terry* appears on a list of potential album titles Bruce wrote in 1974). An early version with alternate lyrics, then known as "Phantoms," was recently released on the bootleg *Deep Down in the Vaults*. The song was also known early on as "Over the Hills of St. Croix."

ERRATA: The lyrics to "Santa Ana" listed in the *Tracks* booklet mistakenly print "Kid Cole" as "Kid Colt."

9. Linda Let Me Be the One

RECORDING LOCATION: The Record Plant, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: June 28, 1975

HISTORY: One of the last tracks—if not the last—recorded for *Born to Run*, which was released a mere two months later. "Linda" was likely considered for the record until the eleventh hour. The *Tracks* version conatins less saxophone and a much stronger vocal than previously bootlegged takes. Other unreleased tracks believed to be considered for *BTR* include "Walking in the Street," "Lonely Night in the Park," and "Janey Needs a Shooter."

BRUCE SAYS: "There were two outtakes from *Born to Run*: 'Linda Let Me Be the One' is on *Tracks*, and there was another one called 'Walking in the Street' which I would have liked to have put on but I couldn't find the master. We searched and searched. It might have been simply recorded over, because in those days, if something wasn't going to make it, you're going to need that tape so you recorded something else over the top."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

MIKE APPEL SAYS: "I won my way on things. When [Jon Landau] and Bruce would say, 'Here's 'Lonely Night in the Park' or 'Linda Let Me Be the One'." They came in and they thought that was going to be a commercial song. And I won my way. I said, 'These are such dogs and the lyrics are so bad... [they] aren't staying on the record—over my dead body.' I told him this stuff was 'shit.' And nobody today would talk to him like that. Oh, no, they sure wouldn't."

—*Backstreets* interview, 1990

ALTERNATE SONG TITLES: Called "Wendy Let Me Be the One" on an early lyric sheet.

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: The rhyming couplet of "spare parts" with "broken hearts" would be used again on 1987's "Spare Parts."

10. Thundercrack

RECORDING LOCATION: 914 Sound Recording, Blauvelt, NY

RECORDING DATE: June 28, 1973

HISTORY: This song held the role of show-stopper until Springsteen wrote "Rosalita," and the live version was frequently bootlegged. But *Tracks* marks the first appearance of a studio cut of this outtake from the second-album sessions. Given that as early as 1975 a live recording was being used as a publishing demo (see "Seaside Bar Song"), "Thundercrack," as Bruce said in recent interviews, simply never got finished. As such, Bruce added new overdubs with help from Vini Lopez (see below) for its inclusion on *Tracks*. Harmony vocals and guitar parts were definitely added, and comparisons between the many live versions and the *Tracks* cut suggest that the entire lead vocal may be new given the distinct differences in phrasing and even key.

BRUCE SAYS: "The song 'Thundercrack' was something that we wrote as the showstopper. It ended three or four different times—you didn't know where it was going to go. It was just a big, epic show-ender that was meant to leave the audience gasping a little bit for their breath—'Hey, who was that guy? That was pretty good.' That was 'Rosalita's' prede-

cessor; later on, 'Rosalita' began to fill that spot in the show and held it for many, many years; probably the best song I ever wrote for that particular job. Before that, 'Thundercrack' had the same function. It was meant to make you nuts, and that's why I wanted to get that song on this record.... It was one of the few songs that actually was [not] finished when I went and found it. I listened to it, and it seemed like it was so long and the guitar didn't sound right; I just said, 'This is going to be too much work'.... But I found a version which was actually pretty good, called up Vini Lopez and I said, 'Vini, I have some singing for you to do'...."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

VINI LOPEZ SAYS: "Bruce called me up and said, 'Hey, I have some music from the early days. One of the songs needs vocals, and I was wondering if you wouldn't mind coming in after all this time and doing it.' I said, 'No, I'd be glad to.' So I went to his studio by his house and did the vocals. It took 40 minutes. We had a good time, just like the old days... We did 'Thundercrack.' He wanted the original guys to sing on it, so me and Federici went in.... I knew all my parts like there wasn't any time in between, like we were just there again, like a time warp."

—*Backstreets* interview, 1998

ALTERNATE SONG TITLES: Listed on some early set lists as "Her Brains They Rattle." Early bootlegs called the song "Heart of a Ballerina" and "Angel From the Inner Lake."

11. Rendezvous

RECORDING LOCATION: Nassau Coliseum, Uniondale, NY

RECORDING DATE: December 31, 1980

HISTORY: This perfect pop song made its live debut in August 1976; the *Tracks* recording comes from the legendary New Year's Eve 1980 marathon gig, curiously the last time Springsteen ever performed the song in concert. "Rendezvous" was one of the first tracks recorded for *Darkness on the Edge of Town* during sessions at Atlantic Studios in the summer of 1977. Apparently, however, no suitable studio version was available, which is why Springsteen chose to make it one of but two live performances on *Tracks*, along with "Bishop Danced." Bruce's fondness for the song prompted him to give it to Greg Kihn, Gary U.S. Bonds, and the Knack. While the Knack went with "Don't Look Back" instead, Kihn and Bonds wound up covering the song on the albums *With the Naked Eye* and *On the Line*, respectively.

ERRATA: The *Tracks* booklet gives Mike Appel a production credit for "Rendezvous"—Appel was long gone by this point.

12. Give the Girl a Kiss

RECORDING LOCATION: The Record Plant, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: November 10, 1977

HISTORY: A previously unknown outtake from *Darkness* and a wonderful showcase for the E Street Band, as most of its members step out for a moment in the spotlight—even Springsteen, who introduces his guitar solo with the words "Boss time." Also shining are the Horns of Love, the horn section from 1988's *Tunnel of Love* tour (Ed Manion on baritone sax, Mark "The Love Man" Pender on trumpet, Richie "La Bamba" Rosenberg on trombone and Mike Spengler on trumpet, with newcomer and Max Weinberg 7 member Jerry Vivino, stepping in for Mario Cruz on tenor sax), who overdubbed the brass parts sometime in 1998. The song is loosely based on the Shangri-Las' "Give Him a Great Big Kiss."

BRUCE SAYS: "The editing on *Darkness* was based around creating a record that had a seriousness of tone. Meanwhile, there were all these bar-band records that we had cut, [such as] 'Give the Girl a Kiss' and 'So Young and in Love.' So I had all this music that I couldn't use at the time."

—*Billboard* interview, 1998

13. Iceman

RECORDING LOCATION: The Record Plant, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: October 27, 1977

HISTORY: This melancholy *Darkness* outtake first surfaced in the mid-'80s and, unlike "Give the Girl a Kiss," fits the album thematically and stylistically. Springsteen didn't even remember the song until a friend assembled a few box set suggestions from bootlegs and gave them to Bruce.

BRUCE SAYS: "Bob Benjamin sent me a tape with about three songs on it, and 'Iceman' was one of them. I had forgotten I had even written it and I had no idea what it was, and I went back and it was a pretty nice song. Finding some of the things you'd forgot you had done, that was fun.... 'Iceman,' like 'Born in the U.S.A.,' was just something that I didn't get at the time that I did it."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: "I wanna go out tonight, I wanna find out what I got" would become one of the core declarations of "Badlands."

BRUCE SAYS II: "That line ['I wanna go out tonight...'] is what I was thinking about at that time. I hadn't recorded in a couple of years. I was stuck in that big lawsuit [with former manager Mike Appel] in the early part of my career, and there was a tremendous amount of 'whatever happened to'-articles at that time. That whole record was a record where I felt like I was going to have to test myself and that was what I wanted to know, so that line ended up in a few different songs."

—Los Angeles Times interview, 1998

14. Bring on the Night

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: June 13, 1979

HISTORY: Originally recorded in late 1977 for *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, this urgent rocker feels more like a *Darkness* track than a *River* track, so it is somewhat surprising to learn the song was cut for both albums. "Bring on the Night" holds the unique distinction of being the only song in the Springsteen canon to reference the '70s disco movement.

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: Several lines and themes from "Bring on the Night" would reappear in the 1983 *Born in the U.S.A.* outtake "My Love Will Not Let You Down," found on disc three of *Tracks*.

15. So Young and In Love

RECORDING LOCATION: The Record Plant, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: Listed as January 6, 1974, but this would contradict musician credits in the *Tracks* liner notes which mention Roy Bittan and Max Weinberg. The song was probably recorded soon after Max and Roy joined the band, most likely October of 1974 at 914 Sound Recording in Blauvelt, NY.

HISTORY: Springsteen often performed his rewritten version of the Chiffons' "A Love So Fine" prior to the release of *Born to Run*, including the legendary February 5, 1975 Main Point radio broadcast gig. The live "A Love So Fine" and this studio version of "So Young and In Love" share almost identical verses, but different choruses which reflect the songs' titles. An instrumental version of the song was included on the early bootleg LP *E Ticket*, and is widely assumed to be the first track cut by Max and Roy with the E Street Band. The melody of "So Young And In Love" is also a close cousin to that of the 1978 tour instrumental "Paradise by the C."

BRUCE SAYS: "...a full band, beautiful ensemble club playing, very exciting. Meant to blow your head off."

—MOJO interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: "Rat traps filled with soul crusaders" would later turn up in "Night."

ALTERNATE SONG TITLES: Known as "A Love So Fine" circa 1974-75.

16. Hearts of Stone

RECORDING LOCATION: The Record Plant, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: October 14, 1977

HISTORY: Springsteen at his most soulful. The night before this session, Bruce joined Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes at the Stone Pony and played five cover songs, so he almost certainly had Johnny in mind when he cut this version. He eventually gave the song to his friend, who graciously accepted it and made it the title track of his third album. This wonderful take is Steve Van Zandt's shining moment on *Tracks*, as his background vocals weave a deep blue hue behind Springsteen's impassioned delivery. The Horns of Love are also featured, this time with Mario Cruz back in place on tenor sax.

17. Don't Look Back

RECORDING LOCATION: The Record Plant, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: Listed as July 2, 1977, but this take, indistinguishable from the frequently bootlegged version, has historically been credited to 3/1/78, though given that Springsteen began performing in concert in March 1977, the July date may be accurate.

HISTORY: How close did "Don't Look Back" come to appearing on *Darkness*? It was included both on the earliest acetates of the album and on track lists which appeared in promotional materials predating the LP's release. At the eleventh hour, as the legend goes, "Don't Look Back" was dropped. We can assume Springsteen himself considered the song completely finished, given that it is the *only* outtake on *Tracks* to still bear the original mixing credit (of Chuck Plotkin and

Jimmy Iovine, in this case). "Don't Look Back" is one of several power-pop tracks circa 1977-79 which appear on the box, and is another song Bruce offered to The Knack, who cut it in April, 1979. Their cover wound up an outtake, too, though it was eventually released. In the liner notes to *One Step Up/Two Steps Back: The Songs of Bruce Springsteen*, which contained the cover, The Knack's Bruce Gary wrote, "The tune was originally scheduled to appear on the *Get the Knack* album, but was pulled at the request of Springsteen's management in order to allow him to release the song first." More than a decade later, on the 1992 anthology *Retrospective: The Best of the Knack*, they still beat him to it.

2

1. Restless Nights

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: April 11, 1980

HISTORY: One of the many songs Bruce wrote and recorded after scrapping the proposed 1979 album *The Ties That Bind* in favor of what would eventually stretch to a double LP. A number of the outtakes from these sessions are accurately described as pop songs, but they fall into two distinct categories, light romantic fare ("Ricky Wants a Man of Her Own," "Be True," "I Wanna Be With You") and romantic tales of a darker nature ("Loose Ends," "Take 'Em as They Come"). "Restless Nights" falls into the latter category, describing a world of "whispering trees," "dark rivers" and "gray" streets.

BRUCE SAYS: "There's an entire album of tracks from *The River*: 'Restless Nights,' 'Roulette,' 'Dollhouse,' 'Where the Bands Are,' 'Loose Ends,' 'Living on the Edge of the World,' 'Take 'Em as They Come,' 'Be True,' 'Ricky Wants a Man,' 'I Wanna Be With You,' 'Mary Lou,' all three-minute, four-minute pop songs."

—MOJO interview, 1998

2. A Good Man is Hard to Find (Pittsburgh)

RECORDING LOCATION: Listed as the Power Station, but was most likely the Hit Factory, where the other song cut this day, "My Love Won't Let You Down," was recorded.

RECORDING DATE: May 5, 1982

HISTORY: A previously unknown *Born in the U.S.A.* outtake, recorded the same day as "My Love Will Not Let You Down" during early album sessions which also yielded "Wages of Sin," "This Hard Land," and "Frankie." Presumably, full-band attempts at *Nebraska* songs were also cut at these sessions. The sound, however, is more reminiscent of *The River* than it is of *Born in the U.S.A.* Given the joined-in-progress, fade-out-before-ending nature of the song, this may be a one-off performance, with the E Streeters following Springsteen's direction as he sings from a lyric sheet. Offering yet another perspective on isolation, the song is thematically kindred to *Nebraska* and, by its mention of Saigon, to "Born in the U.S.A." and "Shut Out the Light." But "A Good Man is Hard to Find" paints an alternate portrait, of the resulting isolation when a man did *not* come home from the war. Curiously, Steve Van Zandt is not credited on the track, though he does play on the other three songs from the May 1982 sessions.

BRUCE SAYS: "There are things that make sense of life for people: their friends, the work they do, your community, your relationship with your partner. What if you lose those things, then what are you left with? The political aspect wasn't something that was really on my mind at the time, it was more just people struggling with those particular kinds of emotional or psychological issues."

—MOJO interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: Adds new context to lines that would eventually appear on *Nebraska*: "across the Michigan line" references the fate of another returned vet in "Highway Patrolman," and "the meanness in this world" also turned up in "Nebraska," which offered a completely different response.

3. Roulette

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: April 3, 1979

HISTORY: Reportedly written within days of Three Mile Island incident, "Roulette" was Springsteen's first true topical song, a powerful tale of legitimate paranoia, the intensity of which is matched by a driving E Street Band performance. Originally released in 1988 as the B-side to "One Step Up" and performed in concert on the *Tunnel of Love* Express tour, "Roulette" was remixed for *Tracks*, and this version differs slightly from the B-side, most notably in the snare drum, which is toned down considerably from the '88 mix and



restored to its original sound. Fans' appetites for this one were whetted prior to its release by a detailed description of the song in the second and later editions of Dave Marsh's book *Born to Run*.

BRUCE SAYS: "It was the first song we cut for [*The River*] and maybe later on I thought it was too specific, and the story I started to tell was more of a general one. I may have just gotten afraid—it went a little over the top, which is what's good about it. In truth it should have probably gotten put on. It would have been one of the best things on the record and it was just a mistake at the time—you get oversensitive when you're going to release the things."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

4. Dollhouse

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATES: August 21, 1979

HISTORY: Written in June 1979, "Dollhouse" belongs to a family of urgent and edgy rockers cut during the *Darkness* and *River* sessions but largely left off of the finished albums. It is lyrically significant in that the first-person narrator is speaking directly to the woman with whom he is having a relationship, something Bruce hadn't done much up to this point.

BRUCE SAYS: "*Tracks* consists of an enormous amount of material that was just out on its own. The interesting thing about the early stuff from CD 2 is that I thought I hadn't really written about men and women until *Tunnel of Love*. Then I found 'Dollhouse,' plus a lot of other things that began to address those issues, even in the early '80s."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

ALTERNATE SONG TITLES: The early demo was referred to as "Living in a Doll House."

5. Where the Bands Are

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: October 9, 1979

HISTORY: This longtime fan favorite (presented here at its proper speed and pitch unlike previous bootleg releases) captures the E Street Band in maximum pop mode, peppering the infectious, upbeat rocker with hand claps, harmony vocals, and inventive drum fills. For his part, Springsteen seems to be having a great deal of fun with this celebration of pop music itself and how good it makes us feel; his guitar solo sends that message home.

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: Three straight lines, beginning with "I get off from work and I grab something to eat," reappeared in "Jackson Cage."

BRUCE SAYS: "When you get into the second CD, that's when we really learned how to record the band in the studio dynamically for the first time. On those sessions for *The River* album—when Stevie Van Zandt came in and joined the production team—we were committed to capturing some of that excitement. You hear the band tightening and there was a sort of very controlled chaos on songs like 'Roulette,' 'Dollhouse,' and 'Where the Bands Are.'

—*Boston Globe* interview, 1998

ALTERNATE SONG TITLES: Referred to for years by fans and bootleggers as "I Wanna Be Where the Bands Are."

6. Loose Ends

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: Listed as July 18, 1979. The tape box reproduced on *The Ties That Bind* bootleg appears to credit the track to 9/23/79, but the inconsistency could mean that the September date is for mixing, not recording.

HISTORY: Fans have been calling for the release of this one since the very first batch of *River* outtakes circulated in 1981. Another early and, until *Tracks*, unreleased example of Springsteen exploring male-female relationships. "Loose Ends" was to have been the final track of *The Ties That Bind* had Bruce elected to release the single album in 1979. *Tracks* uses the same take as the aborted LP, in a new mix which emphasizes organ and glockenspiel over guitar.

ALTERNATE SONG TITLE: Bruce called the song "Loose End" on an early handwritten lyric sheet.

7. Living on the Edge of the World

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: December 7, 1979

HISTORY: This track explodes the myth that all of the *Nebraska* material poured out of Springsteen's pen in late 1981 and early 1982. On November 28, 1980, a performance of "Ramrod" included some lyrics that would later be used in "Open All Night," but "Living on the Edge of the World," cut with the E Street Band in late 1979, is the real eye-opener. Two years later he would transplant four of these verses into "Open All Night," only leaving behind a light-hearted chorus about trying to make a connection to a girl. Musically, the song is yet another *River*-sessions foray into power pop; rockabilly would replace pop as the genre of choice when Bruce next convened the E Street Band for *Born in the U.S.A.* During acoustic home demo sessions for his sixth album in 1981, Bruce attempted this song in the musical style of "Used Cars" and weaved in two lines he would later use to open "This Hard Land."

BRUCE SAYS: "If you have a good line, you don't like to throw it—you don't write that many. If I came up with a line that I liked I always tried to use it because writing was hard and, for one reason or another, things would begin here and end up there."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: Bruce took these verses, wrote several more and threw out the chorus entirely to create "Open All Night"; identical lines also appeared in "State Trooper."

ALTERNATE SONG TITLE: Springsteen's hand-written song lineup for *Nebraska* pictured in *Songs* calls the rewritten version "Wanda (Open All Night)."

8. Wages of Sin

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: May 10, 1982

HISTORY: A yearning, moody burner from the early *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions, and a beautifully restrained performance by the E Street Band. Springsteen's first attempts at the song in acoustic demo form were upbeat and along the same musical lines as "Glory Days." But the tone would shift dramatically, and Bruce knew what mood he wanted by the time

the E Streeters got hold of the song. Imagine the dramatically different album that would have resulted had Bruce opted for songs like "Wages," "Murder Incorporated," "Frankie," and "This Hard Land." One more example of Springsteen's lost relationship songs.

BRUCE SAYS: "That was a real find. I forgot I wrote it. It may have been one of those songs that cut too close to the bone at the time, so I put it to the side. [Laughs] It was actually cut for *Born in the U.S.A.* What happens is very often you have your own personal sensitivities about a particular piece of music or you may be uncomfortable with the way you've sung or what the song is about and you steer away from that a little bit, and I think that's what happened on that one."

—Los Angeles Times interview, 1998

9. Take 'Em as They Come

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: April 10, 1980

HISTORY: One of the first *River* outtakes to circulate among collectors, though the final verse heard on *Tracks* is different from the long-circulated version. Like "Restless Nights" (recorded the very next day), "Take 'Em" matches a blistering E Street performance with another "wide awake dream" lyric. The song's greatest moment may be its false ending, as Max Weinberg keeps the beat going when the band drops out, only to have them kick back into a memorable reprise. Garry Tallent uses the song's conclusion to pay homage to Paul McCartney, playing a part reminiscent of the Beatles' "Rain."

10. Be True

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: July 21, 1979

HISTORY: A romantic tale rife with cinematic metaphors and originally slated for inclusion on *The Ties That Bind* in 1979, "Be True" was relegated to the B-side of "Fade Away" in the U.S. ("Sherry Darling" overseas) for its eventual release in 1981. The *Tracks* remix sounds essentially identical to the B-side. The song received one live airing on the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour (Landover, MD, August 26, 1984) before becoming a cornerstone of the *Tunnel of Love* Express tour set lists (U.S. legs) in 1988. A live version of "Be True" from Detroit, MI, March 28, 1988 was released on singles for "Tougher Than the Rest" and on the *Chimes of Freedom* EP.

BRUCE SAYS: "Well, it's partly about romance. Any piece of work can be looked at through a lot of different veils. Talking about that particular song I'd say, 'Yeah it seems to be a romance song'—what this fellow's doing, he's trying to say, Hey, don't sell yourself cheap. It's saying be true to yourself in some fashion. He's talking to a woman he's interested in but actually that's a device to address, just how do you find yourself through the falseness of some of those things and not sell yourself short and try to get the most out of yourself? In that particular song I think there's a lot of cultural metaphors whether it's in the films or whatever, but I suppose that's what that song was about.... At the time, maybe I was [conscious of that layering.] 'The scrapbook's filled with pictures of all your leading men, so baby don't put my picture in there with them.' You're saying, Don't lock me into this particular box, I wanna reach you in a different way maybe, if I can find it within myself. It's a love song, and then it's a dialogue on remaining true to the things that are important. Good songs work on many different levels; that's what makes them good, that's what makes them last. The other thing was I was trying to write something that was really catchy, a three-minute pop tune, that moved lyrically, that linked together in a certain way. And I was having fun using the film metaphor. To me it almost sounds like it was a hit single; it never was but it feels like one—it's accessible, the singer is open, he's revealing something about himself and he's asking the person he's addressing to do the same and trying to lay out terms for a relationship of some sort. And it all happens in about three minutes and Clarence plays the sax at the end and the glockenspiel plays that riff and it's just light and sort of sweet."

—MOJO interview, 1998

"['Be True' and 'Roulette'] should have been on *The River*, and I'm sure they would have been better than a couple other things that we threw on there."

—Rolling Stone interview, 1988

11. Ricky Wants a Man of Her Own

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: Listed as July 16, 1977 in the *Tracks* booklet, but this is clearly a typo as the song is a known *River* outtake and the '77 date would also make the studio The Record Plant and not The Power Station (Neil Dorfman

wouldn't get recording credit either). Assume this should be July 16, 1979, in the middle of the *River* sessions.

HISTORY: Another slice of *River* session pop (the light romance variety) about a little girl getting all grown up. The *Tracks* version, a different take from the long-circulating outtake, features two new lines in the second-to-last verse as "Daddy's pullin' out his hair, he says, 'The girl ain't got no direction'/She don't care to bring her boyfriends home to pass Daddy's inspection" is replaced by: "She used to like me to take her to a ball game or a movie show/She used to make daddy take his little girl where she wanna go."

12. I Wanna Be With You

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: May 31, 1979

HISTORY: First recorded for *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, and later re-cut during the *River* sessions when Springsteen's power-pop obsession was at its peak. In title alone, the song is an homage to the Raspberries, whose own song of the same title is the opening track of their debut album. Vocally, Bruce has never sounded more exuberant.

BRUCE SAYS: "It was a funny time, cause I'd gotten into Woody Guthrie for the first time. I'd come off *Darkness* and felt I'd really found the characters and the type of writing that I wanted to do. But one of my favorite records that summer was The Raspberries' *Greatest Hits*: they were great little pop records, I loved the production, and when I went into the studio a lot of things we did were like that. Two-, three-, four-minute pop songs coming one right after another. So there was an extra album of those things that got left off, just because I wanted a record that balanced the two things that I was doing, that had a sense of continuity coming out of *Darkness* where you'd recognize the characters."

—MOJO interview, 1998

13. Mary Lou

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: May 30, 1979

HISTORY: Though not the best example of Springsteen trying the same lyrics with different music, presumably that's why *Tracks* sequences "Mary Lou" followed immediately by "Stolen Car" and "Born in the U.S.A.": three familiar songs presented in alternative recordings. Coincidentally, Springsteen uses the word "outtakes" in the "Mary Lou" lyrics. Interestingly, in a 1991 interview, Max Weinberg cited "Mary Lou" as one of three songs he'd pick for an unreleased Springsteen box set.

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK:

Two months later, Bruce would record the superior "Be True" with most of these lyrics intact. A third musical approach to these same words is also known from the *River* sessions, titled "White Lies" (AKA "Don't Do It to Me").

14. Stolen Car

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: Listed as July 26, 1979. Again, this conflicts with *The Ties That Bind* credits (which list September 24, 1979), but that may be the mixing date.

HISTORY: This alternate version (one of but two on the set) presents a completely different arrangement to the released *River* take, and two additional verses at the end carry the story line into a provocative dream sequence and stunning denouement. Like *Tracks*' other alternate take, the acoustic "Born in the U.S.A." which follows "Stolen Car," both versions of the two songs are masterpieces in their own right, but for different reasons. This "Stolen Car" is a cinematic tale told in a plaintive voice which rides Roy Bittan's majestic piano. When Elliott Murphy covered "Stolen Car," included on *One Step Up/Two Steps Back*, it was this version that he chose. The "Stolen Car" released on *The River* is more about loneliness and isolation, marked musically by the distant, detached sound of Danny Federici's organ, and sung with an almost palpable sense of detachment by Springsteen.

BRUCE SAYS: "'Stolen Car' was the predecessor for a good deal of the music I'd be writing in the future. It was inner-directed, psychological; this was the character whose progress I'd soon be following on *Tunnel of Love*. He was the archetype for the male role in my later songs about men and women."

—Songs essay on *The River*.

"['Stolen Car'] was the presentation of that particular guy, of somebody who was concerned with those ideas, for the first time: that if you don't connect yourself to your family and to the world, you feel like you're disappearing, fading away. I felt like that for a very, very long time. Growing up, I felt invisible. And that feeling is an enormous source of pain for people. To

make your life felt, it doesn't have to be in some big way; maybe it's just with your family and with the job, the basic things you live for. So to have somebody who could feel himself slipping away from all that, and who didn't know what to do about it, that idea was related to the heart of almost all my music. The struggle to make some impact and to create meaning for yourself and for the people you came in touch with."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

15. Born in the U.S.A.

RECORDING LOCATION:

Thrill Hill Recording, Colts Neck, NJ

RECORDING DATE: January 1982

HISTORY: Springsteen's misunderstood anthem can be traced back to multiple sources of inspiration: Ron Kovic's book *Born on the Fourth of July*; his friendship with Vietnam vet Bobby Muller which led to the August 1981 benefit gig in Los Angeles; Jimmy Cliff's song "Vietnam," which was presumably included on the same best-of tape as "Trapped" that Springsteen purchased in an airport gift shop during the 1981 European tour; and Paul Schrader's film script of the same name, which was later re-titled *Light of Day*. Springsteen used a bit of Cliff's melody and his title as a starting point for a song about a Vietnam vet (two lines that would later open "Shut Out the Light" turn up in an early demo version of "Vietnam"). Though recorded along with the rest of the *Nebraska* songs, and presumably considered for inclusion on that album, Springsteen seems to have recognized early on that the song was meant to rock. At the 1986 Bridge School Concert and on the *Tom Joad* tour, he reclaimed the misinterpreted song by performing an acoustic arrangement closer to this original form (the *Joad* tour versions took an even bluesier approach). But the impact of the E Street Band-powered released take remains undeniable. "Over the years I've had the opportunity to reinterpret 'Born in the U.S.A.' many times in concert," he writes in *Songs*. "Particularly on the *Tom Joad* tour, I had a version that could not be misconstrued. But those interpretations always stood in relief to the original and gained some of their new power from the audience's previous experience with the original version. On the album, 'Born in the U.S.A.' was in its most powerful presentation. If I tried to undercut or change the music, I believe I would have had a record that might have been more easily understood, but not as good."

BRUCE SAYS: "You sent me the Paul Schrader script which I did not have a chance to read yet, but I did whip up this little ditty purloining its title...song should be done very hard rockin'. This song is in very rough shape, but is as good as I can get it at the moment & might have potential."

—Springsteen's summary of the *Nebraska* tape sent to Jon Landau as reprinted in *Songs*.

"[Paul Schrader] wanted me to come up with some music for the film. But the script sat on my writing table until one day I was singing a new song I was writing called 'Vietnam.' I looked over and sang off the top of Paul's cover page, 'I was born in the U.S.A.'"

—*Born in the U.S.A.* essay in *Songs*.

"I recorded this acoustic version, but then I started on *Born in the U.S.A.* almost as soon as I finished *Nebraska*, so that before either record was released I had an electric version of the song and the acoustic one. In the end, the electric one just seemed to make more sense. I think I was unsure if I had completely gotten it acoustically."

—*Los Angeles Times* interview, 1998

"When I went back and listened I realized that the reason I left it off *Nebraska* was partly because we'd already cut the band version, and this one I felt hadn't really nailed it. But it came off pretty well, when I went back and I listened to it."

—*MOJO* interview, 1998

16. Johnny Bye-Bye

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: January 1983

HISTORY: The first of two songs on *Tracks* which originate from several months of solo recordings cut in the Hollywood Hills, about which very little is known. In the first few months of 1983, Springsteen transplanted himself to California and set up a recording studio in a converted garage. Unlike the four-track cassette deck used for *Nebraska*, the Hollywood set-up was a more professional eight-track recorder, which allowed Springsteen to, for the first time, complete an entire song, recording every part by himself with the help of a drum machine and keyboards. This elegy to Elvis Presley evolved from a *Darkness on the Edge of Town* outtake called "Let's Go Tonight" and was first performed on the European leg of the *River* tour, introduced as "Bye Bye Johnny." It is one of the few Springsteen songs with a shared songwriting credit; co-authorship goes to Chuck Berry, whose own song "Bye Bye Johnny" provided Bruce with his first two lines ("Well she

drew out all her money from a Southern Trust/ and put her little boy on a Greyhound bus") and the core of his song structure. The title was turned around to "Johnny Bye Bye" for release as the B-side to "I'm on Fire" in 1985. The *Tracks* version differs from the released B-side and sounds for all the world like it is the original unaltered solo recording. It begins with a count-in not found on the 1985 issue, and lead guitar and keyboard overdubs heard on the end of the B-side have disappeared. Most significantly, the *Tracks* version uses a drum machine, which was replaced on the B-side by a simple snare, bass, and hi-hat part, presumably overdubbed by Max Weinberg circa 1984-85. Mighty Max still gets a credit for the song on the box set (as does Steve Van Zandt) but his live drumming is nowhere to be found.

BRUCE SAYS: "I cut ['Johnny Bye-Bye'] for a record after *Nebraska*. I enjoyed making *Nebraska* so much, I pursued it before I went back to making [*Born In The U.S.A.*], and I did a series of songs with a small, little rhythm section, but they were still basically acoustic. 'Johnny Bye-Bye' and 'Shut Out the Light' both came from sessions that I did in my garage in California. There was almost a whole record that I ended up not putting out, and these are the best things from that."

—*Los Angeles Times* interview, 1998

17. Shut Out the Light

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: January 1983

HISTORY: One of Springsteen's finest B-sides—for that matter, songs—and an appropriate story to put on the flip side of "Born in the U.S.A." in late 1984. The original version of "Shut Out the Light" included two additional verses which flesh out the story considerably and make an allusion to the main character's possible drug addiction—lying awake until morning in a back bedroom, "Just him and a few bad habits he brought back from over there." Springsteen cut out the verses for the released take heard here and on the single, making the song's story more universal. One of the more noticeable remixes of a released song, the *Tracks* version's vocal has much less reverb, and Soozie Tyrell's wonderful violin part is even clearer and up-front. Performed at 23 shows on the 1984-85 world tour, and resurrected for 11 solo acoustic sets in 1996.

ED THACKER SAYS: We all recall [Springsteen's] vocals as being very big and sitting in the track surrounded by reverb. But in several instances he asked me to make the vocal drier than they might have been 20 years ago; make them a little more personal. We weren't trying to recreate the past with this project; the songs and the music do that themselves."

—*Mix* interview, 1998

3

1. Cynthia

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: April 20, 1983

HISTORY: Following the release of *Nebraska*, the E Street Band reconvened in the spring of 1983 to continue work on an electric, full-band rock record. The tone of the material from these April-to-September sessions is lighter than the May '82 sessions, as evidenced by this delightful tale of female appreciation and worship. Springsteen tried "Cynthia" at a snappier tempo and with a rockabilly flavor on his original demos of the song. Based on the musician credits, Steve Van Zandt was still involved in the sessions at this point. Curiously, Danny Federici does not play on the track.

2. My Love Will Not Let You Down

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: May 5, 1982

HISTORY: One of the three earliest credited recordings from a three-week session during which a lot of the key *Born in the U.S.A.* period material was recorded. The unanswered question is whether it was during these sessions that electric versions of the *Nebraska* songs were attempted or if there was another full-band session to that end in early 1982 ("Lion's Den" dates from January '82, but appears to have been cut as part of the Gary U.S. Bonds *On the Line* sessions). If the former is true, then May was one of the most productive months in Springsteen history. According to the *Tracks* credits, "A Good Man is Hard to Find (Pittsburgh)" was recorded the same day as "My Love Will Not Let You Down." The next couple weeks brought "Wages of Sin," "This Hard Land," "Frankie," "Born in the U.S.A.," "Downbound Train," and one or two other songs released on *Born in the U.S.A.* According

to Marsh's book *Glory Days*, this song opened side two of Jon Landau's first suggested track sequence for the album.

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: Shares several lines with 1979 outtake "Bring on the Night" on Disc Two of *Tracks*.

ALTERNATE SONG TITLE: *Glory Days* referred to the song as "My Love."

3. This Hard Land

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: May 11, 1982

HISTORY: An unexpected but welcome addition to *Tracks*, as Springsteen and the E Street Band re-recorded the song in 1995 and released it on *Greatest Hits*. This original version from 1982 has long been favored by fans (specifically for Roy Bittan's wonderful piano playing), and its inclusion here suggests Bruce has come around to this opinion as well. Springsteen would resurrect some elements of this story for "Seeds." The pacing and performance captured here and on "Frankie" show the E Street Band at its most effortless, sympathetically supporting their singer as he spins his dusty story. **MAX WEINBERG SAYS:** "We recorded about 80 songs for *Born in the U.S.A.* Some of them are great. 'This Hard Land,' which didn't make it on the record, is just fantastic. That's probably my favorite song we've done."

—*Backstreets* interview, 1984

BRUCE SAYS: "'This Hard Land' has always been one of my favorites, and I don't understand how I could let it be unreleased for so long. I really wanted to write music about You, and Your friends, so that you really could feel it when you stood there among thousands of others in the audience. When people think back on their closest friends, the friends they had when they grew up, those friendships always go hand in hand with the music and all the strong feelings that the music brought, feelings which were even stronger if you shared them with somebody. It was an essential part of what rock 'n' roll was about and I really tried to write songs that captured that. 'This Hard Land' was one of those."

—*POP* (Sweden) interview, 1998

4. Frankie

RECORDING LOCATION: Listed as the Power Station, New York, NY, but all other tracks from May '82 were recorded at the Hit Factory, suggesting this may be a typo.

RECORDING DATE: May 14, 1982

HISTORY: The only Springsteen song considered for three albums, "Frankie" was first performed live in April of 1976 and was assumed by many to point towards a cinematic-meets-romantic direction for Bruce's *Born to Run* follow-up. The song was cut early in the *Darkness* sessions, but didn't make the short list for the album. "Frankie" was resurrected with a few slight lyric variations five years later for *Born in the U.S.A.* in the version heard here. Had Springsteen chosen to release that album in the summer of 1983, "Frankie" would have likely made the cut, but by the spring of 1984, newer recordings bumped it off. In 1995, when the Springsteen camp was looking for previously unreleased recordings with which to augment *Greatest Hits*, the 1982 recording of "Frankie" was again considered. This time its seven-minute running time probably kept it off. Perhaps the best example on *Tracks* of a song Springsteen always favored but couldn't fit in.



James Shive Photo

5. TV Movie

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: June 13, 1983

HISTORY: Along with its close cousin "Stand on It," "TV Movie" is a lively rockabilly workout recorded during a short-lived jag into the genre Bruce took in the middle of the *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions (see Max Weinberg's comments below). The song was probably never seriously considered for the album, but it was perfect B-side material (we'll assume Bruce flipped a coin between this and "Stand on It") as a semi-serious pop-culture commentary wrapped in an appealing, old-fashioned rocker. Neither Danny Federici or Steve Van Zandt plays on "TV Movie" or "Stand on It." Clarence Clemons is credited on "TV Movie," but his saxophone parts virtually disappear in the *Tracks* remix.

BRUCE SAYS: "The way it came about was we were in the studio and someone was talking about some episode that had happened to them, and someone else said, 'Look out, man, they are going to make a TV movie out of you.' And that became kind of a running gag whenever anyone came in with a story. 'Hey, you are going to be a TV movie next week.' Then when I went to write about it, it became a mixture of things.... That idea that your entire identity can be co-opted and twisted around and reinterpreted and then accepted as fact because it is the most visible presentation of yourself at a particular moment. It was a joke, but it had some ironic undertones."

—*Los Angeles Times* interview, 1998

MAX WEINBERG SAYS: "I remember one night when we were completely packed up to go home and Bruce was off in the corner playing his acoustic guitar. Suddenly the bug hit him, and he started writing these rockabilly songs. We'd been recording all night and were dead tired, but they had to open up the cases and set up the equipment so that we could start recording again at five in the morning. That's when we got 'Pink Cadillac,' 'Stand on It,' and a song called 'TV Movie.' Bruce got on a roll, and when that happens, you just hold on for dear life."

—*Rolling Stone* interview, 1999

6. Stand on It

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: June 16, 1983

HISTORY: Rockabilly numbers, take two. The most pleasant surprise about "Stand on It" is that the take included on *Tracks* is not the one released as the B-side to "Glory Days" in 1985. This one is longer, with an extra verse (bringing the story line back to the auto race), chorus, and full ending in the place of the original single's fade-out. One gets the feeling Springsteen could write two or three "Stand on It's" or "TV Movie's" a day if he were so inclined. In January of 1999, Springsteen told the Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* that he should have put "Stand on It," "This Hard Land" and "Frankie" on *Born in the U.S.A.* in place of "Downbound Train" and "I'm Goin' Down."

BRUCE SAYS: "A lot of my favorite rock performers were clowns. When you see Little Richard or the Coasters or Jerry Lee [Lewis], there was some element of that in all of them. I loved the desire to make your audience laugh on some level. Onstage I had the physical ability to incorporate that in what I did, but I found it a lot more difficult to write into my music. If I did come up with it, very often when I was making the final cut, that's what I'd leave off."

—*Los Angeles Times* interview, 1998

7. Lion's Den

RECORDING LOCATION: The Power Station, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: January 25, 1982

HISTORY: At first glance, "Lion's Den" appears to be the earliest credited recording cut for *Born in the U.S.A.*, and it is possible that this January session was where the E Street Band gave the *Nebraska* songs an electric try. However, the more logical explanation is that the song was cut during sessions for Gary U.S. Bonds' second album, *On the Line*, which was recorded at the Power Station with *River* recording engineer Neil Dorfman and co-produced by Springsteen and Van Zandt (though weirdly, Van Zandt gets no production or performance credit on the song; Dorfman is credited). It is certainly easy to imagine Bonds singing this biblically themed ditty. If "Lion's Den" were a *Born in the U.S.A.* outtake, we would expect it to bear credits for the Hit Factory and engineer Toby Scott like the rest of the 1982-84 sessions. Another credit curiosity is the omission of Clarence Clemons. If *Tracks*' credits are to be believed, the prevalent tenor sax part on the song apparently isn't played by the Big Man, but was added by Mario Cruz when the Horns of Love (Cruz, Manion, Pender, Rosenberg, and Spengler) overdubbed their parts in 1998.

BRUCE SAYS: "I should have put that out! Why didn't I put that out? It sounds like a hit now. The band is playing great and the horns come in and it has a great chorus. It was just too much fun to put out, I guess."

—*Boston Globe* interview, 1998

ALTERNATE SONG TITLE: Demo version was called "Daniel in the Lion's Den."

8. Car Wash

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: May 31, 1983

HISTORY: Previously unknown *Born in the U.S.A.* outtake and Springsteen's first known composition with a female narrator. Opens with the same "My name is" statement previously employed on "Highway Patrolman" and the *Nebraska* outtake "Losin' Kind." Springsteen's early '83 stint living in Los Angeles is reflected in the "Car Wash" lyrics, which specifically mention the "Astrowash on Sunset and Vine." For the record, "Astro" is a popular prefix for businesses in L.A. Bruce could have set his story at Astro Burger on Santa Monica Boulevard, Astro Liquor on Avalon Blvd., or Astro Pharmacy on Hollywood Blvd. "Pink Cadillac" was also cut this day.

9. Rockaway the Days

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: February 3, 1984

HISTORY: In *Songs*, Springsteen writes that he intended *Born in the U.S.A.* to take the songwriting approach of *Nebraska* and "electrify it." "Rockaway the Days," cut in the waning days of the *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions, is a good example of that approach, as it tells a *Nebraska*-style story (reminiscent of *The Ghost of Tom Joad*'s "Straight Time," as well as "Man at the Top" and "Shut Out the Light" in its final verse) above a lush musical bed that hints at the melody Bruce brought to "Seeds" in its 1986 Bridge School concert arrangement. "Dancing in the Dark" and "No Surrender" also date from these early '84 sessions.

10. Brothers Under the Bridges ('83)

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: September 4, 1983

HISTORY: Not so much an early version of "No Surrender" as previously believed, but a parallel, nostalgic story about teenage friendships and finding one's place in the world. Springsteen couldn't have put both songs on the same album because of their shared sentiment. Like "No Surrender," the E Streeters' elaborate arrangement gives the song an anthemic groove. A decade later, Springsteen would take this title, drop the final "s," and write a completely different song, "Brothers Under the Bridge," a *Ghost of Tom Joad* outtake recorded in May 1995 and now the closing track of *Tracks*.

BRUCE SAYS: "I didn't like 'Brothers Under the Bridges' musically, it sounded too much like something that I was done with, and I was pretty tired of writing lyrics about cars and highways. I wanted to move on. But as a young teenager I really looked up to these guys in 'Brothers Under the Bridges' that are present in every small town. They hung out on street corners with their flashy cars and I really thought that my dream was to be like them. This song takes place in 1963 somewhere in New Jersey, I guess, just before the Vietnam war became part of that town, when rock 'n' roll and the will to live like that, spending the whole weekend in your car, were very strong.... I wanted to be a part of it, but I was too young."

—*POP* interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: The final verse mentions "Signal Hill," presumably the same mythical place first named in the evocatively titled "Summer on Signal Hill," the sublime, Springsteen-penned instrumental released as a Clarence Clemmons and the Red Bank Rockers B-side in 1983.

11. Man at the Top

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: January 12, 1984

HISTORY: Another late candidate for *Born in the U.S.A.* Springsteen performed the song in a simple and stunning, gospel-inspired arrangement twice on the 1984-85 tour. The studio version is faster and less majestic, but does provide a showcase for Clarence Clemmons' saxophone. The wistful lyric, however, is no less moving. While Springsteen is still waiting for a single "in the number-one spot," by the end of 1984, he was truly the man at the top.

BRUCE SAYS: "There is a certain frightening aspect to having things you always dreamed were going to happen happen, because it's always more—and in some ways always

less—than what you expected. I think when people dream of things, they dream of them without the complications. The real dream is not the dream, it's life without complications. And that doesn't exist." —*Rolling Stone* interview, 1987

12. Pink Cadillac

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: May 31, 1983

HISTORY: Arguably the most successful of Springsteen's rockabilly creations in 1983, "Pink Cadillac" began life as the sparest of acoustic numbers when Springsteen recorded it for *Nebraska*. "Self-explanatory," wrote Bruce of the song in his notes to Jon Landau about the *Nebraska* material reprinted in *Songs*. In 1984, "Pink Cadillac" became the B-side to Springsteen's best-selling single ever, "Dancing in the Dark." No wonder it was such a fan favorite. Danny Federici is M.I.A. on this and the other '83 rockabilly numbers. Performed 95 times on the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour, and once in 1996 with Melissa Etheridge. Also covered by Natalie Cole, Southern Pacific, and Carl Perkins among others.

13. Two for the Road

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Rumson, NJ

RECORDING DATE: February 1987

HISTORY: Graduating from the four-track recorder he used on *Nebraska* and the eight-track recorder employed on the 1983 solo demos, Springsteen had a 24-track digital recording studio installed on his New Jersey estate in late 1986 or early 1987. This allowed him the flexibility to write and record simultaneously, even to bring in additional musicians, without ever having to enter a bricks-and-mortar recording studio. He had sought this kind of freedom for years. "I'd grown tired of expending so much energy in professional recording studios," Springsteen writes in *Songs* of his mindset following the *River* tour, "where I rarely got the right group of songs I was after without wasting a lot of time and expense. I found the atmosphere in the studio to be sterile and isolating...." He plays every instrument on the sweet "Two for the Road," a song which could be viewed as the sequel to "Two Hearts." Now that the character has found his "special one," he is pledging his commitment, something certainly on the mind of Springsteen, writing for the first time as a married man. "Two For the Road" was the B-side of "Tunnel of Love" in late 1987. Springsteen has to date not performed the song in concert.

BRUCE SAYS: "I set up my recording equipment above my garage in Rumson, New Jersey, and began demoing. I wanted to go back to the intimacy of home recording. I started to write about something I'd never written about in depth before: men and women. . . . I cut the songs like to a rhythm track, which provided the stability and the sense of a ticking clock. The passage of time was a subtext of my new stories. My characters were no longer kids. There was the possibility of life passing them by, of the things they needed—love, a home—rushing out the open window of all those cars I'd placed them in."

—*Songs* essay on *Tunnel of Love*

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: "When this world treats you hard and cold" is a minor rephrase of "Though the world turns you hard and cold" from "Two Hearts."

14. Janey Don't You Lose Heart

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: June 16, 1983

HISTORY: "Janey," the last song from the *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions on *Tracks*, was cut in June of 1983 with Steve Van Zandt on guitar and background vocals. Like "My Love Will Not Let You Down," this was also on side two of Landau's suggested track listing for *Born in the U.S.A.* When the song was being readied for release as the B-side to "I'm Goin' Down" in 1985, new E Streeter Nils Lofgren went into a studio and replaced Van Zandt's vocal track. Another likeable, mid-tempo rocker in the vein of "Be True," "Janey" has only appeared in concert twice, first on September 27, 1985 at the opening night of Springsteen's record-setting four-night stand at the L.A. Coliseum, and eight years later in the much smaller confines of the Count Basie Theater in Red Bank, NJ on March 23, 1993, at the warm-up show for the European tour. **ERRATA:** *Tracks*' musician credits must be called into question with another omission of Clarence Clemmons' name for a song on which he so obviously, and magnificently, plays.

15. When You Need Me

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Rumson, NJ

RECORDING DATE: January 20, 1987

HISTORY: The earliest *Tunnel*-era recording on *Tracks*. "When You Need Me" is another declaration of love and commitment; like "Two for the Road," it is more black and white in its sentiment than most of the songs on the album, in which the nature (and future) of relationships is more ambiguous. With Max Weinberg the only credited drummer on the *Tunnel* LP, it is safe to assume that Gary Mallaber, long-time drummer for Van Morrison, recorded his drum part on "When You Need Me" relatively recently; that is likely the case as well with Sootie Tyrell's violin.

BRUCE SAYS: "Both 'When You Need Me,' which once again borrowed a lot from both country and gospel, and 'Lucky Man' were very close to making it onto *Tunnel of Love*, but in the end it felt like the story I was trying to tell was complete, so they were left off."

—POP interview, 1998

16. The Wish

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Rumson, NJ

RECORDING DATE: February 22, 1987

HISTORY: "The Wish" debuted at the Christic Institute benefit concert in Los Angeles, November 17, 1990, preceded by a long, touching introduction about what it means, psychologically, to write a song about your mother. This truly autobiographical story sweetly encapsulates Springsteen's relationship growing up with his mother (including the fateful day she took money ear-marked for bill-paying and bought Bruce his first guitar) and stands in stark contrast to the sometimes sobering portrait painted of his father in several songs. What makes this reminiscence so effective is its specificity and detail, the "pink curlers and Matador pants" that bring Adele Springsteen to life. Again, Gary Mallaber's drum part is presumably a recent addition. Bruce resurrected "The Wish" for 18 performances on the *Tom Joad* tour.

BRUCE SAYS: "That's a song I wrote for *Tunnel of Love*, and it's probably as directly autobiographical as I've ever gotten. That may be why it didn't get on the record. It was a combination of having recently gotten married and thinking about my mom. I wrote a lot about my dad at particular times, but she was also very central in my life. . . . Her attitude, the pride with which she always carried herself, the incredible sense of resiliency during extremely difficult situations: never having money, having to borrow to make it to the next month and then having to borrow again. I think at the time the album had taken a slightly different turn and there wasn't a place for it."

—Los Angeles Times interview, 1998

"It was a very divining moment, standing in front of the music store, with someone who's going to do everything she can to give you what you needed that night, that day, and having the faith that you were going to make sense of it—or not: that it was just what you needed and desired at the moment. It was a great sacrifice on her part. It was \$60, but that was finance company money. And so I finally got a song out about it. I gave it to her many years ago, but it's the first time it's been out on record."

—Charlie Rose interview, 1998

ERRATA: In the fourth verse of the lyrics printed in the *Tracks* booklet, "hatred" should be "hot rod."

17. The Honeymooners

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Rumson, NJ

RECORDING DATE: February 22, 1987

HISTORY: Another previously unknown *Tunnel of Love* outtake, "The Honeymooners" was recorded the same day as "The Wish." Its story is basically 24 hours in the life of a young man getting married, moving from ceremony to reception to honeymoon night to morning after with the new in-laws. If there was any doubt that Springsteen recorded *Tunnel of Love* at home, it is dispelled at about 1:52 of "The Honeymooners," when the sounds of a barking dog and a car going by can clearly be heard.

BRUCE SAYS: "Of course it's a true story. But it's not necessarily autobiographical. Not necessarily."

—POP interview, 1998

"I remember the night that I got married. I was standing at the altar by myself, and I was waiting for my wife, and I can remember standing there thinking, 'Man, I have everything. I got it all.' And you have those moments. But you end up with a lot more than you expected."

—Rolling Stone interview, 1987

18. Lucky Man

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Rumson, NJ

RECORDING DATE: April 4, 1987

HISTORY: A late cut from *Tunnel of Love*'s final track list, "Lucky Man" strikes a distinct mood with its brooding rhythm

track, desolate guitar and portentous vocals. The song made for a stark B-side to "Brilliant Disguise" in 1987. Springsteen has not yet performed "Lucky Man" in concert.

BRUCE SAYS: "The loner is an archetype and just a deep part of the American character. Who were all those people who took off out West? Who were all those guys who took off on their own? It's that sort of a character type that's at the core of a lot of my characters who struggle. It manifested itself in some fashion on almost every record I make."

—Los Angeles Times interview, 1998

4

1. Leavin' Train

RECORDING LOCATION: Oceanway Studios, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: February 27, 1990

HISTORY: Another "men and women" song, the main theme that Springsteen carried over from the late '80s into his '90s work. "Leavin' Train" picks up on the motifs of suspicion and "lost faith" from *Tunnel of Love*, while resurrecting the old trick of mixing downbeat lyrics with upbeat music. The song title had circulated among fans after being registered for copyright on September 6, 1995. Though recorded some months after "Viva Las Vegas," Springsteen's first recording without the E Street Band, "Leavin' Train" has the same musician lineup: *Human Touch* mainstay Jeff Porcaro on drums, Ian McLagan of the Small Faces on organ, and Bob Glaub, a member of Jackson Browne's band from 1978-1992, on bass.

BRUCE SAYS: "We recorded a lot of music for the *Human Touch* record, and it was just in search of what I was trying to say. I knew I wanted to develop the ideas I'd written about on *Tunnel of Love*. I felt that was where I had something of value to communicate."

—Billboard interview, 1998

2. Seven Angels

RECORDING LOCATION: Oceanway Studios, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: June 29, 1990

HISTORY: With the clever songwriting device in "Seven Angels," Springsteen manages to capture in one song the conflict spread out across much of *Tunnel of Love*. Musically, this is one of the most accessible songs of the '90s outtakes, with the strong riff in the chorus giving way to a beautiful verse. On this and the remaining *Human Touch* sessions cuts on *Tracks*, the "band" is simply Springsteen and Roy Bittan, with others on hand as needed. Shawn Pelton, now a member of *Saturday Night Live*'s house band and a former bandmate of John Eddie, plays drums here. While the remainder of disc four is a quieter affair, the opening one-two punch of "Leavin' Train" and "Seven Angels" demonstrates that Springsteen is still drawn to writing loud rock songs.

BRUCE SAYS: "Part of putting this set together was a way I felt like reconnecting myself to singing loud and playing loud. That's been a central part of my work since I started."

—Associated Press interview, 1998

"[*Human Touch*] took shape when Roy and I would play together in my garage apartment and make tapes of songs and arrangement ideas I came up with. Then we'd go into the studio and set up what essentially a two-man band. I would sing and play guitar; Roy would play keyboards and bass. Together we'd perform to a drum track. The two of us could create an entire band sound live in the studio. . . . Then musicians would come in and play to what we recorded, or we'd play with them and record the songs live."

—*Human Touch/Lucky Town* essay from *Songs*

3. Gave It a Name

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Rumson, NJ

RECORDING DATE: August 24, 1998

HISTORY: As he did in 1978's "Adam Raised a Cain," Springsteen invokes the biblical figures of Cain and Abel in this sketch of a legacy of violence and shame. Though recorded shortly before the release of *Tracks*, "Gave It a Name" was a *Human Touch* outtake re-recorded out of necessity—the only song on *Tracks* to be recreated from scratch.

BRUCE SAYS: "What happened is I cut the original at the time I cut these other songs, but we couldn't find the master tape of it, and I really liked the song. So Roy came out, and we recut it in August."

—Billboard interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: Borrows the same lines as "The Big Muddy" from Pete Dexter's novel *Paris Trout*: "Poison snake bites you, you're poison, too."

4. Sad Eyes

RECORDING LOCATION: Soundworks West, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: January 25, 1990

HISTORY: Still another of the "men and women" songs, though an ambiguous and even somewhat ominous one. This "Sad Eyes" is unrelated to the live interlude in 1977-78-era "Backstreets" performances known to fans by the same name (the '70s "Sad Eyes" was actually an early version of "Drive All Night"). To fight writer's block, as Springsteen explained in *Songs*, his work on *Human Touch* "began as an exercise to get myself back into writing and recording. I wrote a variety of music in genres that I had always liked: soul, rock, pop, R&B." That kind of stylistic jump-start is more evident on some *Human Touch* songs than others; in this case, Springsteen told *Aftonbladet* that he was thinking of Dionne Warwick.

BRUCE SAYS: "What I started to do were little writing exercises. I tried to write something that was soul oriented. Or I'd play around with existing pop structures. And that's kind of how I did the *Human Touch* record. A lot of it is generic, in a certain sense."

—Rolling Stone interview, 1992

5. My Lover Man

RECORDING LOCATION: Soundworks West, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: December 4, 1990

HISTORY: Sounding nearly identical at first to "Brilliant Disguise," this song soon reveals its own twist (if the title hadn't already): Springsteen is writing in the first person from a woman's point of view. While *Tracks* shows that he had done this before with "Car Wash," that *Born in the U.S.A.* outtake was little more than a character sketch. "My Lover Man" is a full-blown relationship song, told from the other side. There has been speculation that the song was written for Patti Scialfa's solo album *Rumble Doll*, though this has never been confirmed. In keeping with his writing exercises during this period, Springsteen also tried changing his approach in other ways, composing this and several songs on bass guitar.

BRUCE SAYS: "I wrote about half a record on the bass, where you had a note and you had your idea. The only one that made it to release was '57 Channels,' but on this thing there was 'Over the Rise,' 'When the Lights Go Out,' 'Loose Change,' 'Goin' Cali,' 'Gave it a Name,' even 'My Lover Man,' all these very psychological portraits of people wrestling with relationships and their own isolation."

—MOJO interview, 1998

6. Over the Rise

RECORDING LOCATION: Soundworks West, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: December 7, 1990

HISTORY: Like "Leavin' Train," this song title has been on fans' radar since being registered for copyright on September 6, 1995. Another of the sparse songs written on bass and recorded in the months following Springsteen's stripped-down acoustic performance at the Christic Institute benefit concerts.

BRUCE SAYS: "Initially during *Human Touch*, I thought about putting out a record that was basically a bass, a synthesizer, and rhythm, and it created a very austere context for [the] songs to come forth in. I think that happens on 'Over the Rise,' 'When the Lights Go Out,' 'Loose Change,' 'Goin' Cali'.... They were experimental pieces, and they were away from the rock music I was making at the time."

—Billboard interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: Though Springsteen hadn't used it before, the title phrase appeared in multiple song lyrics from this period: "Lucky Town," "Real World" and "Roll of the Dice."

7. When the Lights Go Out

RECORDING LOCATION: Listed as The Record Plant, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: December 6, 1990

HISTORY: Until *Tracks*, "When the Lights Go Out" was the lost track from the Christic Institute benefit concerts. Performed on both nights, November 16 and 17, 1990, it was one of six new songs debuted at the Shrine Auditorium. For an event benefitting an organization that acts as a government watchdog, this may have been the set's most appropriate selection: Springsteen dedicated the song to "the people at the Christic Institute, who watch what's going on when the lights go out." The song was conspicuously absent from *Human Touch*, but three others which debuted at the Christic gigs made it to that album. By late 1995, when "The Wish" turned up in several *Tom Joad* tour set lists, five of the six had resurfaced in one way or another. Recorded just three weeks after

the Christic shows, "When the Lights Go Out" had, perhaps, arrived too early (is it a coincidence that a majority of the outtakes presented on the box set from *Darkness*, *The River*, and *Born in the U.S.A.* date from early in the sessions for their respective albums?), but with *Tracks*, all six of the songs debuted at the Christic shows have now been officially released. In the studio, Springsteen changed the bridge from third person to second, so that the person coming home late at night is no longer "Billy," but "you."

8. Loose Change

RECORDING LOCATION: The Record Plant, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: January 31, 1991

HISTORY: Another song written on bass. A series of encounters tied together with a one-line chorus—"loose change in my pocket"—but Springsteen has since made the song's meaning explicit: the character's connections with other people wind up meaning nothing more than a handful of pennies and nickels. If this song is a descendant of "Stolen Car," the last verse serves as a close-up of "waitin' on that little red light" and places "Loose Change" among Springsteen's most chilling tales of isolation.

BRUCE SAYS: "With 'Stolen Car'... being able to have an intimate life, [that's] something that's essential to filling out your life. He was the guy that started the rest of that idea—the things that I wrote with the bass, whether it's the guy in 'Goin' Cali' or the guy in 'Loose Change' that no matter what he touches it just becomes loose change in your pocket. That's something that everybody has to learn, to find their way through."

—MOJO interview, 1998

9. Trouble in Paradise

RECORDING LOCATION: Soundworks West, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: December 1, 1989

HISTORY: In the late fall of 1989, as the story goes, Springsteen contacted the members of the E Street Band to let them know that he was going to try recording and touring without them. "Trouble in Paradise," recorded shortly after the E Street "breakup" and the earliest *Human Touch* outtake on the box, is perhaps understandably the least musically successful. Shortly after the news broke, Nils Lofgren told *Rolling Stone*: "Right now he's just a little... he's searching. He's allowed to be confused. He specifically said, 'I'm just gonna do some experimenting and try recording some songs with some different players.'" Randy Jackson and Jeff Porcaro, who played on this track, would remain at the core of the musicians on *Human Touch*. Lyrically, the song hews close to *Tunnel of Love* territory, moving slightly beyond the suspicion of "Brilliant Disguise" to look back at a relationship in ruins, interspersing seeds of its demise with "storybook" scenes of domesticity. "Trouble in Paradise" joins "Real World" and "Roll of the Dice" as songs co-written by Roy Bittan, one of only two cuts on *Tracks* with a shared songwriting credit (the other being "Johnny Bye-Bye").

BRUCE SAYS: "One day in L.A. Roy Bittan played me a couple of pieces of music that he'd written. I had never collaborated with another songwriter on any of my other records. I was looking for something to get me going; Roy was enthusiastic and had good ideas. He soon joined the production



Debra L. Rothenberg Photo

team of *Human Touch*, with Jon [Landau] and Chuck [Plotkin]."

—*Human Touch/Lucky Town* essay from *Songs*
"Throughout '88 and '89, every time I sat down to write, I was just sort of rehashing. I didn't have a new song to sing. I just ended up rehashing *Tunnel of Love*, except not as good."

—*Rolling Stone* interview, 1992

10. Happy

RECORDING LOCATION: A&M Studios, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: Listed as January 18, 1992, but more likely January 18, 1991.

HISTORY: The only other song recorded at A&M Studios on *Tracks* is "Goin' Cali," which was recorded a year earlier and suggests that this recording date could be a typo. If "Happy" was actually recorded on January 18, 1992, rather than 1991, it may be the only song on the box *not* recorded specifically for an album. The *Lucky Town* sessions took place in the fall and winter of 1991; by January 1992, it would have been too late for this song to be considered for *Lucky Town* or *Human Touch* as the press release announcing both albums, complete with track lists, hit within two weeks of the credited recording date for "Happy." Regardless, the song seems to serve as a summation and distillation of Springsteen's state of mind at the time. As he told *Rolling Stone* in 1992: "I've struggled with a lot of things over the past two, three years, and it's been real rewarding. I've been very, very happy, truly the happiest I've ever been in my whole life. And it's not that one-dimensional idea of 'happy.' It's accepting a lot of death and sorrow and mortality. It's putting the script down and letting the chips fall where they may."

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: With "Let's shed our skins and slip these bars," "Happy" shares imagery with the similarly themed "Living Proof." But lines like the opening couplet "Some need gold and some need diamond rings/Or a drug to take away the pain that living brings," turn up more directly in "My Beautiful Reward."

11. Part Man, Part Monkey

RECORDING LOCATION: Soundworks West, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: January 1990

HISTORY: While this recording is an outtake from *Human Touch*, "Part Man, Part Monkey" was a staple of the *Tunnel of Love* Express tour, debuted on opening night (Worcester, MA, February 25, 1988). Live, the song incorporated Mickey and Sylvia's "Love Is Strange," with Bruce calling, "Sylvia! How do you call your loverboy?" and Patti Scialfa cooing her response. Alumnus David Sancious returned to play keyboards in the studio, but the modern E Street Band's live experience with the song wasn't put to use: this take, also featuring Omar Hakim on drums, was recorded shortly after the band's breakup. The "some poor sucker" of the opening line is John T. Scopes, prosecuted in July 1925 for teaching evolution. Springsteen sometimes mentioned a TV movie based on the Scopes Monkey trial, starring Jason Robards and Kirk Douglas, in his introduction to the song on the *Tunnel* tour. While films have often inspired his songwriting, the movie in question didn't air until March 20, 1988—almost a month after the song's debut. The made-for-TV *Inherit the Wind* was, however, a remake of Stanley Kramer's classic 1960 film of the same name, which may be the original inspiration for this amusing take on man's animal nature—with the narrator as "living proof" of Darwin's theory. First officially released in 1992 as a B-side to "57 Channels (and Nothin' On)."

Bruce says:

"Now there's them that believe that we came from Adam and Eve, and then there's them that, um... like this." —concert introduction, May 3, 1988

12. Goin' Cali

RECORDING LOCATION: A&M Studios, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: January 29, 1991

HISTORY: In 1992, Springsteen talked to *Rolling Stone* about his move to Los Angeles: "I've always felt a little lighter out here. I've had a house in the Hollywood Hills since the early '80s, and I'd come out here three, four months out of the year. I always remember feeling just a little lighter, like I was carrying less." One year earlier, he had captured that feeling in this story of moving out west, where the narrator arrives and finds a bar: "Bartender said 'Hey, how's it hangin', tiger?/He had a shot of tequila, smiled and whispered 'lighter.'" While the driving bass line brings to mind "57 Channels," the song is clearly more personal, talking of his parents making the same trip to California in 1969, and of finding peace in a new place with a new family. If there were any doubt, Springsteen has said that the song is indeed autobiographical.

BRUCE SAYS: "Yes, that's me.... 'Goin' Cali,' I suppose, was just an experimental thing I laid down in the studio one day: I don't even remember recording it or how it came about, but it traces, ironically, my journey at that time out West." —*MOJO* interview, 1998

LYRIC CROSS-CHECK: "A little while later a son come along" hearkens back to "Spare Parts," but Springsteen took that image of new life, put it at the beginning of a song and created something new altogether when he raided this *Human Touch* sketch for *Lucky Town*'s superior "Living Proof" later in 1991. The latter song reworked lines like "It could burn out every trace of where you been" and "So he pulled his heart and soul down off the shelf/ Packed them next to the faith that he'd lost in himself."

13. Back in Your Arms

RECORDING LOCATION: The Hit Factory, New York, NY

RECORDING DATE: January 12, 1995

In a documentary with plenty for Springsteen fans to gawk at, this song was the primary attention-grabber. *Blood Brothers* captured the E Street Band's studio reunion at the Hit Factory in 1995, where "Back in Your Arms" and several other new songs were recorded for *Greatest Hits*. The song was seriously considered for the album, but unlike every other new recording seen in the film, it was not issued on either *Greatest Hits* or the subsequent *Blood Brothers* EP. The documentary didn't present a complete version of the song; *Tracks* not only serves up the song whole, it offers a completely different take. Springsteen's impassioned vocal has been toned down a bit, while more prominent organ and background vocals have been added. Roy's piano solo has been removed, but the piano swells nicely at the end to join Clarence's sax solo. As the only representation of the E Street Band on disc four, it's a powerful demonstration of their balance of soul and restraint.

JON LANDAU SAYS: "He cut a version of this by himself for the project he was working on for the last year or so, and it's a terrific version of it, but it always felt sort of like it could really be a great band song. And we're trying to get it right." —*Blood Brothers*, 1995

ALTERNATE SONG TITLE: *Blood Brothers* titled the song "Back in Your Arms Again."

14. Brothers Under the Bridge

RECORDING LOCATION: Thrill Hill Recording, Los Angeles, CA

RECORDING DATE: May 22, 1995

HISTORY: The only outtake to be released from *The Ghost of Tom Joad* album sessions, "Brothers" debuted on the first leg of the *Joad* tour, on December 16, 1995 in Boston. The title was familiar as a *Born in the U.S.A.* outtake, but *Tracks* confirms that the title is the only commonality. Paired nightly from that point on with "Born in the U.S.A."—and occasionally with "Shut Out the Light" as well—"Brothers" became part of a bigger tale of veterans returning home from Vietnam. In performance, perhaps as part of a continuing effort to reduce the number of "Billy" in his songs, Bruce changed the character from Billy Devon to Jimmy Devon.

BRUCE SAYS: "This is a song set in the San Gabriel Mountains, a mountain range in between the San Fernando Valley and the Mojave Desert, just outside of Los Angeles. Los Angeles is a funny town, because you can go about 25 minutes east, and you hit the foothills of these mountains. And you'll go for 100 miles and there might be one little store. There's a little town up around 7,000 feet, and the rest is just pines, takes you down the other side into the desert. There was a group of homeless Vietnam vets that had left L.A. to set up a camp, a camp out there in the mountains. This is a story about one of them who has a grown daughter that he's never seen, and she grows up, and she comes looking for her dad. And what he tells her."

—concert introduction, April 24, 1996

ALTERNATE SONG TITLE:

Springsteen regularly introduced the song on tour as "Brothers Under the Bridges."

Backstreets is grateful for the insights provided by recent interviews with Bruce Springsteen, which made the scope of these liner notes possible. *MOJO* magazine's in-depth interview with Springsteen, conducted by Mark Hagen and published in the January 1999 issue, was essential to this project, and we refer you to that issue for the complete interview. Thanks also to articles and interviews by Robert Hilburn in the *Los Angeles Times*; Melinda Newman in *Billboard* (11/7/98); Steve Morse in the *Boston Globe* (11/20/98); Larry McShane for the Associated Press; Dan Daley in *Mix* magazine (January 1999); *POP* magazine (Vol. 2, No. 7); and the *Charlie Rose* program on PBS.